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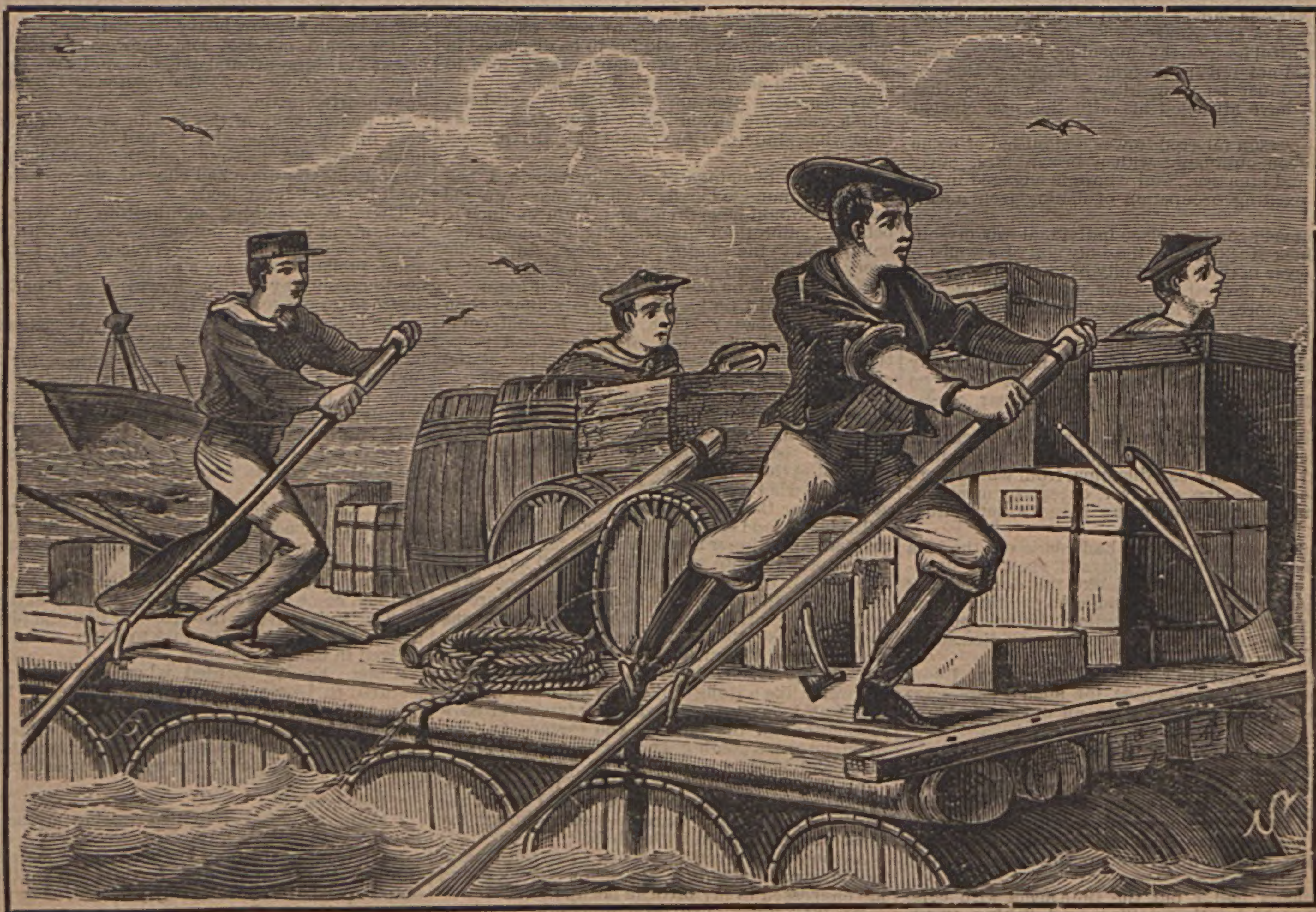
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Vol. I

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THE BOY CRUSOES; OR, THE YOUNG CASTAWAYS OF THE PACIFIC.

By ST. GEO. RATHBORNE.



We hastened as much as expedient, but the raft being heavy and no tide to help us, it was some time before we reached the mouth of our creek.

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THE BOY CRUSOES;

OR,

The Young Castaways of the Pacific.

By ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE.

CHAPTER I.

MY DILEMMA—TAKING A SAIL—ON BOARD THE "JOHN SMITH"—THE SUSPICIOUS CANNON—HOW I WAS TRAPPED—AN OMINOUS NAME—AM I SAILING UNDER THE BLACK FLAG?—RED, WHITE, AND RED.

THE day was a lovely one, or at least would be if the many promising signs augured truly.

From over the vast waste of waters the veteran king of day lifted his mighty head and his many arms of brightest sunshine penetrated every possible nook.

It was one of those soft, dreamy days, when all nature seems to enjoy herself in the cool of the morning, and then shrink into retirement with the coming of noon's fierce heat.

But, to tell the truth, there were no dreamy days for loyal people at the time I write of, for the trumpet of war had sounded across the land, and men who loved the dear old flag were on the field of battle, while those incapacitated for duty from various causes worked in their own way for the good of the country.

Beautiful as was the morning, there was one who did not relish the sight. Indeed, at this period it must be something extraordinary that would have attracted his attention and elicited praise.

The person referred to was a stout lad of some seventeen summers, with a brown face, curly hair, and blue eyes; and who was engaged in the very exciting occupation of fishing from a sail-boat.

That very commonplace individual was myself. I, Jack Merton, was the only son of a well-to-do lawyer in the ancient city of Boston.

We lived several miles out, on the hills back of the sea-shore, and father went to his business in the carriage or light wagon.

Having issued from the city schools a full-fledged graduate, my parents had mapped out my future career by deciding that I must either go into the law office and study for the bar, or else leave home to enter college.

This was the crisis that had arrived to change the tenor of my hitherto quiet life, and I now found myself in a sad dilemma, from which there seemed no escape whatever, except by means of the law as laid down in my parent's determination.

In some way or other I had conceived the idea that hereafter school and myself must be strangers, as I had come to dislike the domineering pedagogue exceedingly; and as to entering a dim, musty law office, and spending the best portion of my life there, pah! it seemed very distasteful to me.

I do not want the reader to believe that I was in any way a scapegrace, for such a personage has always been and will be an object of abhorrence to me.

The case was simply this:

I was possessed of a somewhat lively disposition, and might at times have partially merited the appellation of wild, for I loved anything that would prove sport or an adventure, and I may as well acknowledge that this restless disposition has not left me up to the present day, although kept within bounds.

Perhaps, had I put the time spent with companions in hunting, sailing, and fishing excursions, to a better advantage and studied oftener,

I might have made a better scholar of myself, and derived such pleasure from my school-life that I would now gladly hail the chance thrown out for continuing at college.

Well, who can say it was not for the best? One of our friends the fatalists would surely declare that as everything is ordained, it must be, and no act of ours can alter it.

It was at our early breakfast on this lovely morning that my father cast a thunderbolt upon the table, in the shape of a few mild words—at least it resembled this dread object to me just then.

That night, he said, it was expected that my decision in regard to the course of my future life, would be made, and rendered to him.

This was a formidable announcement, for I had hoped that he would give me until the time for school to break up, came on, in order to think it over.

But he was a lawyer, and shrewdly saw that if at the end of vacation I should enter his office, these two months would be thrown away.

It seems natural for one to seek retirement when a momentous question is to be discussed in all its bearings, and I, like many others, love to be alone with nature on such occasions.

My dearest possession was a little sail-boat, which was some fifteen feet in length, and made somewhat similar to our yachts of the present day.

Under the teachings of a sailor cousin, I had learned to manage her as well as many an old Jack Tar would have done, and, I am inclined to believe, better than the majority of them, they being used to the rigging of a large ship, while every sheet of my boat was so familiar that I could lay hands on them in the darkest night.

Where could I find a place more solitary than at my fishing-bank? Then, again, I could combine the excellent system of precept and practice, and think my situation over, while, at the same time, I was pursuing my favorite sport.

Only the preceding day I had given my boat a thorough scrubbing, which job was well done, judging from her clean appearance; and Bessie, my only sister, had laughingly dubbed me the "knight of the brush," painting in glowing colors the while what a nice shield I could have made at Professor Daub's, the town painter.

Taking a good stock of fish-hooks, lines, sinkers, bait and dinner along (the last for myself, as I did not anticipate getting home until late in the afternoon), I went down to where the boat was moored, by the side of a wharf, in a small creek, and, casting off, I drew in the painter, and was soon on my way to the fishing-ground, which was several miles distant.

The wind was fresh, so the light craft skimmed the water like a thing of life; the air was cool and pleasant, being yet untouched by tardy old Sol's rays, although the glow in the eastern horizon proclaimed his coming, and very soon he showed his genial face.

Around me in all directions flew the sea-gulls, sometimes even alighting upon what I called the truck, in imitation of larger vessels, although my mast was not capped with a ball.

As the wind proved favorable, I was not long in reaching my destination, and seven o'clock found me engrossed in my favorite occupation.

My luck must have been unusually good on this morning, for even at this late day I can re-

member how I hauled in the members of the finny tribe.

To sit down and calmly think over my situation with this sport going on was simply impossible, and twelve o'clock came and went without my vouchsafing one thought on the detested dilemma which had brought me out there.

Strangely enough the fish continued to bite voraciously until noon; then they nibbled very cautiously, until I concluded that any further time spent in this direction was lost.

Satisfied with my fishing, I now bethought me of my other reason for coming to this spot; and after appeasing hunger with the luncheon, I raised my sail, determined to take a long pleasure excursion during the afternoon, and stood out to sea.

As I passed our house, I saw my sister waving her handkerchief to me from a projecting rock, and I answered the signal with my own.

Some premonition of what was in store for me seemed to weigh my spirits down; and while gazing back at the fast-disappearing house on the cliff, I began to grow heavy-hearted.

This could not last long, however, with the bright sunshine around me, and as I once more turned my attention to the open sea, I became light-hearted again.

All unconscious of the fate in store for me, I kept on my course, and in half an hour both house and cliff became indistinguishable, and when twice that time had elapsed, the very shore itself looked faint indeed.

There is something exhilarating, to boys at least, about being far out on the ocean, with the water stretching out on every side, and I grew quite jubilant over my situation, being careful not to go out any further, however, as I had no desire to go out to sea in this open boat.

I had changed the direction of my vessel, as I often called her, and was tacking about in the face of the land breeze, when I noticed for the first time a ship coming directly towards me from the north, her course being, as I proudly calculated, to show my knowledge of the compass, south-east by south.

Anxious to witness her passing, I once more changed my course, and rode directly before the wind.

She was a noble-looking vessel, although I noticed the masts were far from perpendicular, and this peculiarity gave her a rakish appearance, as the sailors have it.

I wondered at seeing most of the sails reefed, and had come to the conclusion that this stylish-looking brig must be the property of some pleasure-seeker, who had no cause to hurry, when she arrived in hailing distance.

A man, heavily bearded, whom I rightly conjectured to be the captain, leaned over the taff-rail.

I saw him raise what appeared to be a speaking-trumpet to his lips, and the next moment the hall rang hoarsely over the water that separated us.

"Boat ahoy!"

"Hello the ship!" I replied, raising my hands to convey the words unbroken.

"Come on board for a few moments," sounded through the trumpet, and I could see that the ship's speed was considerably lessened, as though she was about to lie to.

Among the many thoughts that rushed into my

brain just then, not the faintest suspicion of foul play might have been found.

I had often desired to see a ship that was just going out to sea, and now the chance was before me. After a few moments' maneuvering I managed to get alongside, although the oars had to be put into use before this end was gained.

Then a rope-ladder was thrown down to me; but, disdaining this landsmen's method of getting aboard, I seized a swinging rope, and went up hand over hand, taking the painter of my sail-boat along with me.

The brig was quite a large one, and, to all appearances, well made.

While coming alongside I had noticed the name on her stern, and could not help remarking upon its singularity.

It was that beautiful, romantic one, over which raved the poets of old—

"John Smith."

Most of the sailors, of whom there seemed to be an unusually large number, were in the rigging; but there were several close beside me, who proceeded to fasten my boat to the stern.

I could not help noticing that they had a peculiar swarthy look, as though natives of a southern clime; but my meditations were interrupted by the captain.

I had taken it for granted that he wished for some information regarding the rocks to the south, or the formation of the coast, which I was ready and willing to give, intending to ask in return the favor of looking through the ship.

One of the mates was standing near the captain a tall, thin fellow, with an air unmistakably southern.

The commander himself was of medium height, with a face covered by black hair, and wearing a heavy pea-jacket, as though the air was too cold for comfort.

After gaining my attention he turned and led the way down into the main cabin.

Upon entering the cabin my first act was to look around me.

I found that the cabin was comfortably, indeed I might say elegantly furnished, being some twenty feet long by ten wide, and with articles in it excelling our own luxurious drawing-rooms.

There were lockers in abundance for keeping things, a splendid table screwed to the floor, lounges, chairs, and a row of nautical and astronomical books on a shelf.

From the low ceiling just beyond the skylight, hung a lamp, with colored glass protecting it.

Two small windows, very like bull's eyes at the end of the cabin, told that we were in the stern of the vessel.

On each side were two doors, which were numbered in rotation from one to four.

These were, doubtless, state-rooms for the use of the ship's officers, or any passengers who might be on board.

I must say, the sight of these things surprised me not a little, and created a revolution in my mind.

Heretofore, it had been my impression that confusion reigned on all outward-bound ships.

I had read of their getting most of the crew on board, dead drunk, of the unclean decks, and baggage piled in the cabin.

Surely these writers must be grievously mistaken.

I had never seen a cleaner vessel in my life than this one, which must have been in the harbor not five hours before.

The captain had motioned me to a seat as soon as we entered, and of course I did not stop to observe all these things at once, but took them in gradually while we were conversing.

As I sat down in an easy arm-chair, the captain spoke.

"Well, my lad, I suppose you have cast an eye around?" said he, questioningly; and I replied that I had cast my eye around.

"What do you think of the *Jack Smith*?" he asked with a smile.

"From what I have seen of her, the vessel is a splendid one," I answered.

"I'm very glad you like her, boy. How would you like to take a voyage in her?" and the captain gave me a peculiar look as he spoke, of which I could make nothing at the time, but which afterwards forced itself upon my mind in its true significance.

I could not help starting at his words, and he must have seen a pleased look come upon my face, for of all desires in the world I would have chosen a voyage to distant lands.

It was my ambition then; it is my desire now; and I doubt if the love for travel, inspired by such works as Bayard Taylor has given to the world, will ever be satiated. But I shook my head sadly, yet firmly.

"Of all things in the world, captain, I would like it best, especially on such a ship as this; but

my parents, I could not leave them; they would never permit it."

"But why need you ask? Are you not on board now? What is to prevent your remaining, and going to sea? You shall see the whole Atlantic and Pacific coast if you wish," and the captain leaned over toward me, smiling strangely.

"I could not leave my parents; I was brought up to honor and obey them, captain," said I, rising to my feet, for I began to feel uneasy, and wished myself safe on shore again. The captain also arose to his feet.

"Come," said he, "I will show you around a little. You can easily make the shore, if you do not wish to remain. I have some questions to ask, for answering which I will pay you liberally."

The insides of the four state-rooms equalled my expectations, for they were gotten up very handsomely, and although rather contracted quarters when compared with my own spacious room at home, were cozy and neat.

Upon going down below, I was surprised to see in the hold, several unmounted cannon, and a low iron door leading into a small room, made me think of a powder magazine.

"Times are dangerous now, my lad," said the captain, noticing the look of astonishment, not to say alarm, that appeared upon my face at the sight of these weapons of war, "and warrant our carrying these useful implements. It is not pleasant for a brig the size of this, to be captured by a small sloop, just because they happen to have a gun or two. Our owners have guarded against that by giving us the means of defense."

As we once more entered the main cabin, I could restrain myself no longer.

"Captain, when I came on board, I noticed that a storm seemed brewing, and, if you have no objections, I'll answer your questions, and then make for land. To be caught here in a gale would be certain death," and I sat down as I spoke.

"Right, boy," said he, and taking out a wine bottle and two glasses from a locker, he filled each of them half full, and handed one of them to me.

Seeing that it was port wine, which they used at home, I did not hesitate to take it.

"A quick, pleasant, and profitable voyage to you, captain," I said, and gulped down the contents of the glass.

Like lightning I felt it course through my veins, my head seemed bursting from some roaring sound within; but I had sense enough left to notice that the captain had put down his wine untasted.

I heard the door slam, and knew the captain had gone, but, upon attempting to get up, I found myself powerless to move.

The last thing I can remember was loud orders from the deck, and a rattling noise, as though the men were getting things snug for a storm.

Then I lost all consciousness, and the hours passed away unheeded.

I opened my eyes and looked around me with undisguised amazement.

Instead of being in my own well-remembered room at home, I found myself lying on a small berth in one of the state-rooms.

As I recognized my surroundings, all that had occurred rushed into my brain.

Leaping to my feet, I staggered into the main cabin, wondering the while at my extreme weakness, which appeared almost like sickness.

Passing through this, I mounted the companion-way and issued forth upon the deck. My first action was to sweep the horizon with my eyes, and a cry of despair broke from my lips when I realized the true state of affairs.

The vessel was scudding along before a stiff breeze, and no land in sight. Turn as I would, nothing but the endless waste of waters met my view.

What seemed to be the truth now struck me, and I reeled so under the shock that, but for the friendly support of the mizzen-mast (for, strange to say, the brig had three masts, although, I believe, it is customary for this class of vessels to have but two) I would have fallen to the deck. I had been forcibly pressed into the service. The cannon I had seen below were now mounted, and in their places, which fact strengthened my conviction.

To my eye, inexperienced even though it was, the vessel looked every inch a fast-running one; and astounded at this unexpected, and to me, just then, unwelcome escape from my dilemma, I sat down on a coil of rope to think. What would my parents say when they found I was missing? Without doubt they would think that I had run away to sea in order to escape a fate they knew I disliked.

To this day I am ignorant of the captain's idea in going to the trouble of drugging me, when he had me just as securely the moment I set foot on his vessel. In fact, he could not tell himself, say-

ing that it was only a whim of his; and I am led to believe that he was but following out one of those strange incongruities, if I may so term them, that sometimes come upon even the wisest of us. It was a most singular thing for this gruff man to do; but, I really think, he desired to spare me pain by breaking the thing gradually, although he would never admit it, and this proved that he was not entirely heartless.

Seeing him standing aft near the wheel, I arose and walked toward him, taking no notice of the rude sailors around, who seemed laughing in their sleeves.

"Captain, this is a rough joke you have played on me," I said.

"Well, I acknowledge, my lad, it is; but you might have fallen into worse hands than mine. I was in need of a boy, and could not stop long enough in port to pick up one, so I resolved to take you the minute I clapped eyes on you. The Government will pay you well for your services; and if you are made of the same stuff as most boys, you will be content," said the captain.

My alarm increased every moment, and I grew excited.

"Where is my boat? Captain, if you put me on the first homeward-bound ship we speak, you can have the boat, and she cost a heap of money, too," and I anxiously awaited his reply.

The captain smiled at my simplicity, and even before he spoke, I saw it too; was not the boat in his hands already?

"I am sorry to say she was swept away in the storm, and doubtless dashed to pieces on the shore, for it could not very well have escaped," he replied.

"Storm! what storm?" I exclaimed in surprise.

"Cast your eye at those men," said he, pointing to a group of sailors, who were busily engaged in replacing a broken spar with a new one; "the storm you spoke of came down upon us like lightning, and though brief, was severe. My lad, you really ought to be thankful to me for keeping you on board, for you would never have reached the shore alive in that cockle-shell of yours."

"Captain," said I, suspiciously eying the queer uniform he wore, "is this a new ship? I'm sure I never heard of a *John Smith* in the Government service."

He smiled again; that peculiar smile of his, and shook his head.

"You've mistaken the name of the craft," said he.

"Mistaken the name? Why, I'm sure I saw that on the stern," I exclaimed.

"Well, it isn't there now, if this court knows itself," replied the captain; and after giving him a sharp look to see whether he was humbugging or not, I made haste to reach the extreme end of the vessel.

The vessel was rolling in a rough sea, and not being the owner of a sailor's sea-legs, I found it hard work to stand.

Seizing hold of the low railing that ran around the high poop, I leaned over, and read the name of the vessel.

The sight that met my eyes so astonished and confounded me, that my hands refused to do their accustomed duty, and gave way beneath me.

But for the timely aid of the captain, who had followed close behind me, I must assuredly have fallen overboard, and being too weak and dumbfounded to swim, have been drowned immediately.

Grasping me in his arms, the captain waited until I had recovered, and then let me regain my feet, looking at me rather pityingly, I thought.

The light-colored stern, with the name *John Smith*, seemed to have undergone a change, for now the single but fearful word,

Philo.

glared at me from a black field.

Of course, like most persons, I immediately jumped at a conclusion, the most remote I could imagine.

I had been trapped on board a pirate.

Such things I had often come across in my literary reading, and the look I turned on the captain must have amounted to horror, judging from what he afterwards told me.

"A pirate!" I managed to ejaculate, at which he gave an exclamation.

"Not so bad as that, I hope, my lad," said he; and turning around, he made a motion with his hand to one whom I rightly conjectured was the chief mate.

This man drew a flag from a chest, and springing on the bulwarks, fastened it to a rope, after which he began pulling it up.

As the breeze caught the bunting, it flaunted out, and revealed to my eyes, not the red, white

and blue, so familiar to my eyes, but the fatal red, white and red.

"You see, boy, not a pirate after all; only a Confederate privateer," said the captain, while I stood with my brain whirling like a top.

I was on board a cruiser of the enemy I had always detested.

CHAPTER II.

A CONFEDERATE PRIVATEER—I HAVE QUITE A FEVER—THE BLOCKADE-RUNNER—IN THE PACIFIC—PATAGONIA AND CHILI—THE CHASE—A TERRIBLE STORM—ON THE ROCKS—THE DOOM OF THE PRIVATEERSMEN—LEFT ON BOARD.

THE sun was very near the zenith, and, picking out a place in the shade, I sat down to consider what ought to be done. My situation had proved to be even worse than I had before imagined, for, had the brig been a Federal man-of-war, I would at least be serving the flag which I had been brought up to love and respect; but on a ship of the enemy, I could know no peace. A vessel like this would be sure to risk a great deal, and, should she be captured, I would share the fate of the crew, and make an intimate acquaintance with some Northern prison.

How strangely had my troubles veered around! A short time before I would have gladly welcomed anything that would release me from my dilemma; now, to prove how queer human nature is, I must own that at that moment I could have wished myself in no better place than under old Yale's protecting roof, and myself labeled in the eyes of all beholders, a freshman.

The crew of this Confederate privateer and blockade-runner did not impress me very favorably, not being used to men of the South. That they were natives of a Southern clime, I could see at a glance, for all were possessed of the swarthy complexion so common in that region. Where the captain had obtained his men, I cannot tell; but, doubtless, most of them came up with him to take possession of the ship which was being fitted out and loaded with ammunition and stuff under another name in a Northern port. A few of them may have been picked up while the ship was being prepared, and I afterwards found out that this was the case. Before half an hour had passed by, I began to feel quite sick, my head swimming around in a strange manner; so I determined to seek my berth below until it passed away.

That it was not sea-sickness, I was positive, for one who lived half of his days upon the sea was not likely to be affected by this petty landsman's sickness.

Reeling over to where the companionway was situated, I found my road below.

Reaching the small state-room, I pulled off my boots and jacket, and threw myself into the berth, feeling both sick and miserable.

For hours I lay there, raving wildly as the dread fever seized upon me, and then I lost all consciousness.

The days and weeks that followed seem to me but a dream. Even at this late day I have but a faint recollection of a terrible cannonade, which I afterwards learned occurred while the *Pluto* ran the blockade, and entered a Southern port to deliver her cargo of percussion caps and other things valuable to the Confederate army; of another engagement, which was between the privateer and an armed vessel, that she eventually sank; and, lastly, after what seemed an eternity of interval, of the whistling wind and the roaring of mighty billows, which greeted the cruiser on her passage around Cape Horn, that most dangerous of spots.

When I became conscious again, the first object that met my heavy eyes was the form of the captain, and even in my bewildered state, I recognized him.

"Where am I?" was my first exclamation, not knowing to make of the narrow bed and small apartment, so entirely different from my own spacious room at home, now, as, without an occupant.

Still I seemed to recognize the captain. In a few words as possible he told me what the reader knows about my being kidnapped from home, and everything seemed to come back to me as he spoke.

"But what makes me so weak?" I asked, surprised that a day's sickness should deprive me of my strength, so that I could not lift my head, and even my voice seemed to have lost its accustomed firmness.

In wonder I attempted to raise my hand, and was just looking at its skeleton proportions in absolute horror after getting up half way, when it fell back of its own accord.

"Why, you've had a bad fever, my lad, and it has wasted you away fearfully. But now it is over, and we'll soon have you on deck, providing

you try to obey my directions. Food is the thing that will do it, and you shall have plenty of it soon. Don't pipe your eye, my boy, thinking of home, for it will only make you worse, and do no good. Eat this gruel which I had Pomp make for you."

He took up a bowl filled with warm gruel, and fed me with a spoon, just as if I had been a baby. Indeed, I was in a worse condition than this, for I could hardly move a limb; and as to talking, my voice at its fullest tension seemed a mere bagatelle of a whisper.

The captain must have become strongly attached to me during my sickness, or else he would never have acted in this manner; and the kind manner extended toward me, told as plain as words that he was sorry for having carried his little scheme of kidnapping a Northern cabin boy into execution. The gruel worked wonders; and as my strength returned, in a measure, the curiosity which Mother Eve bequeathed to her children took possession of my brain.

"Captain, may I ask you a few questions?" said I, convinced that I could not very well have had a fever and have recovered in a day, and that the roaring of cannon and howling of winds which I seemed to see in the dim vistas of the past, were something more than delusive fantasies of a disordered brain.

"You had better go to sleep, lad. A good nap will do you more good than all your questions, and I will have something to tell you at a future time."

"But, captain," I exclaimed, "I can never sleep sound with these things weighing on my mind. How long have I been with you?"

"Well, you'd hardly believe it, lad. We've a half doctor on board, and he says the case is certainly without a parallel. You have half recovered three times, and then sunk back again until I despaired of ever getting you up. It is now some four months since you came on board. There, I said you wouldn't believe it."

"But four months, captain, four months! How can I believe it?"

"By taking a squint at yourself. Why you're as thin as a rail, but you'll pick up mighty soon. Avast heaving, my lad. I'll let you examine my log some of these days, and see what we've been doing while you were out of your head."

"But where are we now? Four months may have taken us a great ways from home, captain?" queried I, still thirsting for knowledge.

"I believe you are a good distance from your home. We crossed the line long ago, and have just rounded the cape—Cape Horn, you know. A bad time it was, too; I lost several men in the last storm!" returned the captain, smiling.

"Cape Horn! Then we're in the Pacific!" I ejaculated.

"Exactly; but stow your gab. I must go up now, for I left the deck in charge of Gaston, and he's half dead for want of sleep. We sailors get little in stormy times, you know. Turn in and sleep now, and I'll guarantee you'll feel a hundred per cent better when you wake," saying which he left the little cabin.

My mind was in a whirl for the next ten minutes, as the reader may well suppose, for that which the captain had told me made my thoughts mix up promiscuously.

There was a small bull's eye, which I termed a window, made of thick glass, just a foot above me, and although I could not look out, yet light from beyond managed to gain an ingress.

I could feel the vessel rolling heavily in the trough of the sea, and knew from this that the waves were strong, although to an old sailor they might have proved gentle enough.

While staring at the spot where the light from the bull's-eye struck the wall, and trying to collect my thoughts into shipshape, I fell asleep.

How long I slept I know not, but it must have been several hours, for, when I awoke, I saw a line of light along the side of my room, which came from a crack in the partition, separating me from the main cabin. All else was dark around me, and I soon found that this stream of light must proceed from a lamp.

Hearing the captain in conversation with some one whom he called Gaston, and whom I supposed was one of the mates, I coughed several times to attract his attention. In this maneuver I was successful, for in another moment he stood beside my berth, and upon leaving what was wanted, asked me to try and pull a tassel that hung within reach.

To my joy, I found that my strength had returned so far that I could move my arm readily.

The tassel proved to be the terminus of a rope, which, when pulled, sounded a bell, and a moment after the cook, or doctor, as he was called, entered.

He was a huge Ethiopian, with a flat nose, but, nevertheless, a good-humored face.

I afterwards learned that Pomp had been a

slave on the captain's plantation in South Carolina, and when the latter sold all to buy the *Pluto*, and use her in the interests of his native State, he took the negro along with him.

The captain now told him to make a bowl of gruel and bring it, together with a biscuit soaked in wine, to me.

Obedying these commands, Pomp left the apartment, and my friend, the captain, quickly followed him.

Soon the cook reappeared, and I quickly made way with the gruel.

The wine-soaked biscuit I hesitated at, having taken an antipathy against all liquors, and I could not help blaming myself for drinking the port in which the drug had been placed. But realizing, as a medicine, the wine would really do me good, I swallowed the sea-biscuit, now soft enough when soaked.

I made a wry face as I tasted my old enemy, the port, and resolved never to drink again—a resolution I have faithfully kept to this day.

During my sickness the captain, urged on by remorse most probably, when listening to my wild ravings, must have become very much attached to me, judging from his frequent visits to my room as I grew better.

The time passed in conversation or in my listening to him read some book mutually interesting.

I learned all that passed during my illness; of the struggle of the blockaded Southern port; their subsequent voyage to the Pacific in search of legitimate prey in the shape of Northern merchant vessels; their flight with an armed one just outside Brazilian waters; and last, but not least, the rounding of the cape.

I was greatly interested in all that had occurred during the voyage, and the thought that I had passed through these events, even though in an unconscious state, served to make me feel more concern in them.

For hours at a stretch, I pored over the captain's log-book, repeating time and again until I knew it by heart, the few sentences which, in the same concise way that distinguished the whole narrative, marked my advent on board the *Pluto*.

When I first put in an appearance on deck, we were still in sight of the barren shores of Patagonia, for the captain, strangely enough, laid his course within a few miles of the coast, and at times we approached close enough for me to see small objects with the naked eye.

My chief delight was to sit up aloft in as easy a position as I could find, and with the captain's spy-glass, survey the land in its dreary state.

To me, the immense rows of penguins lining the beach or scraggy rocks, looked wonderfully like vast lines of white-vested soldiers.

Birds, with the exception of this class, were not very numerous; and while I missed our northern ones, with the exception of the sea-gulls, I did not find many new species.

Now and then a huge albatross would come near us, darting down upon some unlucky fish, perching on our spars, or else swimming after the vessel in search of bits of bread or meat from the cook's galley.

One day, shortly after my arrival on deck, I witnessed a strange spectacle, the like of which I had never seen before.

This was nothing more than catching a bird with a fish-hook.

The hook, a small but stout one, was baited with a piece of meat, and then left dangling over the stern, for to have thrown it into the water would have served as an invitation to the sharks that were generally seen in our rear.

Hardly had a moment passed by, before a huge albatross swooped down, swallowed both hook and bait, and was composedly flying away, but the line soon checked its flight, and, amid a most tremendous fluttering, it was hauled on deck, where I examined it closely.

It is a curious fact, and yet a true one, that when I cut the string and let the bird swallow the piece that was in its mouth, it did not offer to fly away, but walked about as if part and parcel of the ship's crew, and I was very much amused to see how closely it followed the black cook, as if recognizing in him its friend and purveyor.

Indeed, the bird seemed about to take up quarters there, and the only way to get rid of it in the end, was by pitching it overboard some six or eight times.

By taking daily exercise, such as climbing up to a dizzy height, and on several occasions even reaching the main-truck—although I never was reckless enough to stand upon it—and doing various athletic feats, my strength soon came back to me; and when we sighted the pleasant-looking shore of Chili, I was stouter and stronger than ever.

The captain and doctor said they had never heard of a fever lasting as long as mine, and de-

clared that no one but a sturdy boy could have stood it.

They also united in declaring that if my fever had been long, my recovery was most surprisingly rapid.

I had assumed charge of the cabin and the four state-rooms, but as only a small amount of my time was consumed in keeping them clean, I had many leisure hours to enjoy myself and pore over the books taken from the wonderful shelf.

Strange to relate, among them I found a dilapidated, coverless copy of my childhood's friend, "Robinson Crusoe."

How it came there I never discovered, but judged it must have been by accident; at any rate, the well-beloved volume was tucked in between a large book something similar to "Norie's Navigation," issued from England a few years later, and a work on astronomy, invaluable to those who go down to the sea in ships.

Another book which I delighted in was one that described Chili, the wonders of her mountains, and the various creatures to be met with in her waters and forests.

One day, an hour or two after noon, when out of sight of land, and most of the sailors engaged in making gaskets, or cringles, splicing ropes, or repairing worn parts of the rigging, we were all aroused from our indolent positions, which, to tell the truth, were growing exceedingly monotonous.

I was reading a book in a pleasant, shady spot, and the second mate, a tall, dark man from Atlanta, Georgia, named Barker, stood near me, the chief mate, Gaston, being down in the cabin, engaged in looking over some maps with the captain.

Happening to cast my eyes upwards as I turned a leaf I noticed that the man above had his glass sighted, and instead of ranging it along the horizon, as he would have done if looking for a sail, he had it pointed steadfast in one direction.

Knowing what this meant, I called the mate's attention to him, and he, using his hands as a trumpet, called out:

"On the lookout, there!"

"Aye, aye, sir," came from the man as he lowered his glass.

"What is it?" asked the mate; and we listened eagerly for a reply.

"Ship in sight, sir," yelled the lookout.

It would seem as though a current of electricity passed through every man, judging by the way they leaped up.

"Where away?" was the mate's next question.

"Ahead; dead ahead, sir," came the response.

By straining our eyes, and peering in the designated direction, we could all of us see the vessel, which appeared like a small speck in the distance, resembling for all the world a sea-gull.

The captain and Mr. Gaston came on deck at this moment, having heard the commotion, and truly guessed its import. Seizing his glass from the hands of his mate, who had brought it up from the cabin, Captain Wayland sprang upon the bulwarks, and holding on with one hand to the shrouds, gazed long and steadily at the other vessel; but she was too far away for low observation. Taking the glass down, after his fruitless attempt to discover the nature of the stranger, he gave a few orders to the man at the wheel, and then called out in the usual form:

"On the lookout, there!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" returned the man perched aloft, the glass still glued to his eye.

"What d'ye make her out to be?" shouted the captain.

"Can't make her out yet, sir; looks like a merchant ship, and I see a flag moving," returned the man, leaning forward in his observations. A moment later he added: "It's a large brig, sir, heavy laden."

"And the flag?" asked the captain, anxiously.

"Yankee Doodle," was the characteristic reply; and no sooner did the captain hear this pleasant information, than he gave orders to crowd on all sail.

Like monkeys, the willing sailors sprang into the rigging, and, as I had never seen a ship under every stitch of canvas, you may be sure I used my eyes to advantage.

As there was a favorable breeze blowing, the *Pluto* tore along like a thing of life, making, as I soon ascertained from trial, over twelve knots an hour. She would have done even better than this had the wind come from a different quarter, or the chase changed to another direction; for, indeed, it would have been hard to find a faster vessel than this "three-master" of a brig. That we gained upon the stranger rapidly could be readily seen, as he appeared more distinctly every moment.

At length we could make her out with the naked eye, and through the glass it was soon ascertained that she was no brig, as the lookout had

declared, but a large vessel of some twelve or fourteen hundred tons burthen.

Those on board of her seemed aware of the fact that we were in full chase, for she had all sails set, and was doing quite well in the effort to escape us. It was of no avail, however, for the *Pluto* had been built after the manner of the low slim pirates of former days, and had all the requisites of a fast sailer, which in truth she was.

On the other side, the ship before us, although perhaps able to distance many of her equals in size, was nothing when compared with our vessel, her owners having taken more pains when building her to make everything staunch.

With them, the amount she could carry, and her capability of withstanding a storm, outweighed the advantages that might accrue from fast sailing.

The sailors, who now watched the chase from various favorite positions, declared that we came upon her hand over hand.

It was now near the middle of the afternoon, and in order that the capture should be made, it was necessary that we should come up with her before night enveloped the trackless ocean in her sable mantle, as in the darkness she would have a fine chance to elude us.

Not a gun was fired, although we knew a ball from Long Tom, as the splendid brass cannon at the bow was called, would easily reach the flying vessel. The captain was sharp enough to realize that to fire would only retard our progress, and he was waiting until we got up closer.

Once, however, the great brass cannon was touched off.

It leaped up into the air and bounded back a foot, when the chains held it fast.

The roar was deafening to me, but I valiantly stood my ground, and through an opening in the smoke, caught sight of the splash made by the ball, some distance to one side of the fugitive vessel. This was, as I learned, an invitation to "lay to," but the other ship paid no attention to it, beyond firing off an old cannon from her rear, the ball of which struck the water midway between us, and after skipping or ricocheting over the waves, sank out of sight.

The captain stood near me. "Jack," said he, "you remember the promise I made you about sending you home as soon as possible? Well, I think the time has come for me to keep it. If we take that vessel, I shall man her with my men, and set crew adrift in the boats, and if you wish you shall go with them."

"There will be little or no danger, for we are near the coast, and Valparaiso cannot be many hundred miles away; indeed, I think it is about one."

"From there, with the money I shall give you, it will be an easy thing to engage a passage home."

"I have a suspicion that there are enemies too powerful for me in that port, so I steer away from it."

"I hate to part from you, but must keep my promise, and I am really sorry because of the wrong done you."

"We are hauling up fast on her now, and but for that flying tarpaulin, I could make out her name."

A short time after, I noticed a gloomy scowl upon his face, and that he cast frequent glances forward and southwest, as if apprehensive of danger from that direction.

"I don't like the looks of yon clouds," said he, pointing almost behind us, and upon looking I saw what was to all appearance land, and such I might have called the low, gray cloud, had I not known that there was only a vast waste of water in this quarter.

When I heard him remark to the mate that there was quite a chance of the fugitive's escaping after all, I could not but feel glad, even though my stay on the privateer would be prolonged by that occurrence; for it must be remembered that I cherished loyal, Northern sentiments, even after the many arguments the captain and myself had waded through.

As the cloud arose higher in the heavens, the wind grew more violent, and at length the order was reluctantly given to shorten sail, for it was dangerous to carry all, as to the heavy lunges of the vessel proved.

In a short time the wind amounted to a small gale.

The merchantman, although it had to take some sails in, could stand a heavier press of canvas than the *Pluto*, and only reefed where we furled.

As to the result of this, it was soon seen, for she made good headway, and began to draw slowly but steadily away from us.

Our captain took things philosophically, although the men grumbled a little. But nothing could be done to avert the calamity, as to attempt a run before the gale with all sails set would have been little short of madness.

The monstrous waves, constantly increasing in height as they rolled onward, came booming along crested with foam. A few sea-gulls flew swiftly past, uttering their shrill cries, as though glorying in the coming storm.

As the wind grew stronger the merchant vessel went ahead more rapidly, and at length disappeared in the gathering gloom. Night was now coming on, and the captain ordered every sail to be furled, as he saw the mercury in the barometer descending with fearful rapidity.

Truly my acquaintance with the mild, gentle Pacific was not a very pacific one. Under bare poles, we scudded along before the wind, and just as darkness began to descend upon us the rain began to fall. Not in drops, as was customary with this element, but in sheets, as if some one was pouring the water in a perfect deluge.

Terrific peals of thunder rent the air (as a horrible joke, I would mildly remark that it never settled up its rent), and these were followed by brilliant flashes of lightning that lit up the sea for hundreds of rods in almost every direction.

I was standing where the captain had left me, wrapped up in an old pea-jacket, and having on a water-proof tarpaulin, when one of these almost dazzling flashes lit up the scene for miles around.

During the momentary illumination I thought I saw a ship in the dim distance ahead, but almost blinded by the extreme brightness of the flash, I could not make sure of it before darkness once more covered everything like a pall. Eagerly I waited for the next blaze, and in the interval heard, or thought I did, human shrieks and cries.

Once again the ocean was lit up, and I strained my eyes to see the ship. There she lay, a little ahead of us, her masts gone by the board, and we could tell that she was rapidly sinking, having either struck a rock or sprung a leak, most probably the latter.

On her deck men were running around as if their brains were turned by the sudden fright.

By the same flash I was enabled to see that we were not many cable's lengths from the shore.

Our men could not help seeing the merchant-ship, and they began to hope again, for they might after all gain their prize-money.

At this moment a severe shock was felt by all on board the *Pluto*, and, to our horror, we realized that she, too, had struck a rock.

It is strange to observe what a panic one coward can create.

A single man made a rush for the life-boat, yelling out that the ship was sinking, as indeed it looked like it. Catching the fever, the rest of the crew dashed after him, despite Captain Wayland's orders, and lowered the boats. Some jumped in to keep them steady, while others threw in provisions, and then by main force the captain was pulled into one, and the three boats pushed off. I was not in any one of them. At the first alarm I had hurried below, foolishly, I must own, although it proved wise in the end, to see if there was really a hole knocked in the ship's side. Hearing the noise from the cabins, just before entering the hole, I suspected the right cause of it, and hurried up to join them, but it was too late. They were some ten fathoms away when I shouted out, and, as I held a lantern in my hand, like that in one of the boats, the captain saw me. He endeavored to steer back, but the giant waves beat him away, and one of the men seizing the tiller, turned the boat's head away, fearful lest they should capsize.

A cry heard above the roar of the storm reached my ears, and, as the lightning flared up, I saw the two boats commanded by the two mates, dashed upon a foamy breakwater, doubtless the reefs, and with their contents, smashed to pieces, while the third one, in which was Captain Wayland, was just disappearing around what seemed to be the point of a peninsula.

The ship seemed held in a vise, and the waves came dashing over the deck, sweeping off everything that was not fastened securely; but as the hatches were battened down, very little water went below.

By means of the incessant flashes, I saw that the merchant vessel had long since gone down, doubtless bringing all her crew to a watery grave. And there I was, left on board the *Pluto*.

CHAPTER III.

SLEEPING ON THE *PLUTO*—I COMPARE MY SITUATION WITH THAT OF OTHER SHIPWRECKED MARINERS—ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.,—LEAPING ON A RAFT—I RESOLVE TO DEFEND MY LIFE AND PROPERTY—FRIENDS OR FOES.

I WAS left on board the *Pluto*, and as the men, when they forsook her, had cried out that the vessel was sinking, I was naturally greatly alarmed for my safety.

For almost half an hour I clung to the ratlines with one hand, and held on to an old life-preserver that I had found with the other, constantly expecting to feel the ship going down, and yet being pleasantly disappointed.

About this time the storm began to show signs of abating, and as this mental anxiety, consequent upon a continual suspicion that I could feel the ship settling, rendered me very nervous, I resolved to go below, and settle the matter at once.

The waves no longer washed the deck, and I found little difficulty in removing the covering to the companion-way.

Somewhat to my surprise and satisfaction, I found the cabin perfectly dry, and pleased with the discovery, I cautiously made my way down into the hold.

By the aid of my lantern, I looked around, and found that the sailors had been entirely wrong in their suppositions, for there was no hole to be seen.

The captain being the one best acquainted with the structure of the ship, had refused to leave, had been forced into the boat by main strength.

Had the men given him time to speak, he would have explained his ideas in a convincing manner, and backed up his theory, if need be, by going below and ascertaining the nature of the damage.

Putting several things together, I at length arrived at the conclusion that the *Pluto* was tightly wedged in between two rocks, for she hardly moved under the greatest waves.

This discovery lifted a load from my mind, and I hastened on deck again.

The storm proved to be of short duration, for it was rapidly decreasing in violence, though the waves still ran high, and would have capsized any common row-boat in a moment.

Feeling sure that the vessel would stand the storm out, and not seeing any necessity of my remaining on the exposed deck any longer in my wet state, I went below.

After changing part of my clothes, I threw my weary frame upon the lounge in the main cabin, and, despite the tumult without, soon slept.

When I again opened my eyes, I soon realized where I was, although the storm and its tragedy seemed but a dream at first.

Wondering if anything had taken place that could affect my fortunes, I jumped up from my resting-place and made haste to reach the deck.

A marvelous change had taken place during the night; the gale had gone down, and now the water was only agitated by the long, even swells so peculiar to the ocean.

Not a cloud could be seen in the sky, and the broad band of light in the east heralded the rising sun.

Anxiously I cast my eyes toward the shore, which was about half a mile from the ship, and in plain view.

On the preceding night, when my eyes had fallen upon the shore during the momentary flashes of lightning, I had taken it for granted that it was the coast of Chili, but now, viewing it in broad daylight, I began to have serious doubts of this.

I could see several miles of land, with a high hill rising up at the end nearest me, and beyond this, on both sides, was the water of the Pacific.

It might have been an island, and yet again there was a chance of its being part of the main land, stretching out into the ocean.

At any rate, it was a beautiful spot to me, and the green verdure so close at hand seemed like an old friend to me, as I had seen nothing but the barren shores of Patagonia for months.

The land was covered all over with trees and bushes, except that part near the water, forming the sandy beach, and the summit of the hill, which was rocky and desolate-looking.

From my position on the deck of the *Pluto*, I could not tell just then whether the land before me was an island or a projection from the coast of Chili; and although I must own that it looked very suspiciously like the former, still there was a chance, and I entertained hopes of its being the latter.

While standing upon the bulwarks of the privateer, gazing upon the spot, which, in case it proved to be an island, as I greatly feared, would doubtless prove my home for weeks and months, or, it might be, years, all that I ever heard or read about shipwrecked mariners came vividly into my head.

I remembered the book below in the cabin, with the dilapidated binding, one similar to which I had read a dozen times at least when home—dear old "Robinson Crusoe."

There seems to be a secret magnet about this volume, a something that draws boys' hearts to it, and renders them slaves ever after.

Show me the youth who has not conned over this volume at some time or other—providing he

had the chance—and I will point out a boy who ought to be dressed in petticoats.

Most boys deem it their greatest treasure, and as for me it had for many months been my veritable *vade mecum*; time and again had I spent hours imbibing the knowledge it contained, little reckoning how soon it was to come to practical use.

Like this castaway sailor, I now decided to look after my safety and future comfort, and try to bring something else besides myself to the shore. It was certain that under the influence of the waves the ship could never hold out a week; and if a storm came up under that time she would go to pieces at once. Therefore I must be expeditious in my undertakings if I wished to assure success.

Of course the first thing to be done was to hunt for a boat, if such a thing was to be found on board. From stem to stern I searched the vessel through, but the hunt was fruitless, and in the end I was forced to give it up as a bad job.

There had been four boats on board, three of which had been taken by the crew. The fourth was not to be found, so I took it for granted that it had either been washed overboard or else smashed to pieces during the storm.

In the end I found that I must be content with a serviceable raft, as had Robinson before me.

Fortunately, in my search for a boat I had taken note of the rows of empty water-casks, which I knew, being air-tight, would prove a sure foundation for my proposed float. So tumbling a lot of them on deck, I pitched them over the starboard side, where the outgoing tide held them fast against the side of the ship.

There were between twenty and thirty of them, and having, by some diplomacy, arranged them in four rows, I proceeded to nail stout boards along them, until I had a very strong raft.

Before doing this latter part of the business, and just after pitching the casks over, I made a small float with four of them, which I threw into the water, and after getting my boards down, lowered myself on it. In this way I could paddle around my larger raft, fixing things here and there, until it was ready for occupancy.

When this was done I looked for the first time at my watch, which I had kept with me during my adventures, and finding it was almost noon, I proceeded to satisfy my appetite before attempting to load up. The inner man being satiated, I began to carry up all the articles I wanted, and placed them on my raft.

In order that the reader may know how far I followed the coverless book before mentioned, I will give the things without details.

First, I brought up half a dozen guns, two of them being rifles of approved make; as many pistols; two small kegs of powder; several bags of bullets; what seemed to be a canister of shot; and a large case of percussion caps.

Then came the carpenter's large chest, which I had to empty first, and load up again on the raft; two kegs of mixed nails; and a sheet of lead, so large, that it kept me an hour getting it on deck and lowering it again by the aid of my improvised windlass. To these articles I added a heavy barrel of salt beef; a coop, containing two dozen live chickens, which I found between decks; a small coil of rope; a pile of hams; a box of lucifer matches, and last of all, a cask of water, for I was not sure that any of this, to me, useful article, could be found upon the land.

I found that these articles constituted a good load, and so as the raft sank rather deep in the water, I only added my own weight.

It was now late in the afternoon, and the tide had commenced to flow in toward the shore, pulling my raft quite strongly. Just as I was about to unfasten the line that held me to the ship, I remembered something else I needed, and vanishing over the side, I sought what I wanted, and then returned to my raft.

I had obtained a bundle of oars, of which there was quite a stock on board the privateer.

The wind, what trifling amount there was, happened to be in my favor, and as the tide came along quite strongly, as is usual in this out-of-the-way country, it did not take very long for the raft to draw near the shore.

When I got inside the reefs through an opening, and close up to the beach, I saw the mouth of a large creek, now inflated with the tide, and thinking that if I followed it up, a suitable place for landing might present itself to me, I aimed for it, and in a few moments was paddling up the stream.

After moving onward for about a hundred yards, and finding that the creek, as I supposed it to be, although it might really be an arm of the sea extending thus far into the land, wound in and out like a huge serpent, I began to look around me for a good place to serve as a wharf where I might land myself and the cargo.

The creek, even if not very wide, was deep. I

could see specks of foam on its surface at this point, and a sullen roar above told that there was some sort of a cataract near me. So this, in itself, proved the nature of the creek.

I was beginning to think that, after all, I would have to sleep on the raft, when I espied the mouth of a cave on the left bank of the creek, some thirty or more yards from the water.

It was near the base of the hill, and the stream was wider at this point than at any I had as yet seen.

Paddling the raft over to the left side of the stream, I found a nice little cove, deep and rock-bound, which was admirably suited for a landing-place, and pushing the raft tightly against the shore, I secured it first by a couple of long paddles thrust into the mud outside, and then by means of a rope, passed around a rock and tied to the nearest tree.

Having thus brought the raft safely to the land, I took one of the rifles and loaded it, not knowing but what I might encounter ferocious beasts of prey, and I desired to be ready in case anything dangerous presented itself for consideration.

Upon examination, I found that some of the revolvers taken from the wall of the cabin were loaded, and so I thrust a couple of them in my belt to keep my knife company.

By this time I really looked like an adventurer, a bloody pirate, or anything in fact but plain Jack Merton, who had been, not six months before, attending the town school at his native place.

Knowing that if I hoped to get my load in the cave before darkness came on, I had best make use of my time, I began to work with a will.

The distance between the water and my destination was short, and as there was a gradual slope I managed to roll up what barrels and casks I possessed; but the carpenter's chest I was forced to leave on the raft, while the lead I pushed on to the shore, intending to leave it until I could cut it up into smaller sections.

There was little danger of its being carried away by the tide, for—well it was lead, and every one knows what that is.

After pulling, carrying or rolling the rest of my possessions up to the cave, I stood outside to rest after my labors, and watch the sunset.

Like a victorious general, old Sol sank beneath the waves, his golden rays streaming through the bare rigging of the forsaken privateer, and filled with admiration at the sight, I looked around me before entering the cave.

Just as I was about to turn away, I caught sight of something that rather startled me.

About fifty yards up the stream was a long row of bushes, and peering out from among these I noticed three white faces, their owners having in all probability just come upon the scene.

As I turned fully towards them, one of the strangers sprang to his feet with a strange cry, and came running toward me.

One thing I was certain of, and this was the fact that these three belonged to either the *Pluto* or else the fugitive merchant ship.

If the former, they would take my goods away, and perhaps make a slave of me; for although a favorite with the captain, I had always been at loggerheads with the crew on account of my Northern sentiments.

On the other hand, supposing they belonged to the doomed vessel which the privateer had chased, they would naturally suppose me to be one of the *Pluto's* crew, and in the end make me a prisoner of war.

Now this was something I didn't fancy; after having been kidnapped from home, and carried away by the Confederates, it wouldn't be nice to be roughly treated by my own countrymen.

Then, again, should they prove to be some of the blockade runners' crew I had no idea of being compelled to give up the things I had lugged ashore, and assume a subordinate position.

Not if I knew myself; I held possession, and possession is nine-tenths of the law both of civilized and savage countries. I would make a show of fighting for my rights at least.

These things went through my mind like a flash, and I saw that my situation was really desperate; so pulling out a revolver as the single one sprang out of the bushes, I pushed back the hammer, and raised the weapon so as to be ready.

The last rays of the dying sun fell upon my face and figure, while that of the man was concealed by his own form.

As he ran I heard him ejaculate in a surprised tone:

"I declare! Jack Merton, by the shooting dog star!"

All of the privateers' men knew my name, and the fact of his having uttered it would have only made me positive of its being a *Pluto* man, but for that exclamation. Surely it was a very familiar one to me.

I lowered the pistol and looked sharply at the runner as he came toward me.

He was dressed in a half-officer, half-seaman garb, and when he came within the range of the sun's rays, I caught a good glance of his features. They were very familiar to me.

"Tom! Tom!" was all I could utter, so overcome was I at this meeting, and the dear fellow caught me in his arms with a hug like that of a bear.

It was Tom Jordan, my cousin, who was a sailor, and who, as the reader will perhaps remember, had taught me how to manage the little sailboat it had once been my good fortune to own.

CHAPTER IV.

COUSIN TOM—FIRST NIGHT ON SHORE—HOW WE CAME TO AN UNDERSTANDING—ON THE MAIN HATCH—FIGHTING THE WAVES—THE BLOODY PRIVATEERSMAN—OUR PROVISION STORE—AT WHOLESALE ONLY—JUST A TRIFLING BLOW.

Tom was twenty, almost three years older than myself, but despite this slight disparity in our ages, we were always the best of friends.

He had always been a good scholar—one of those singular boys, who not only dote upon books of travel and explorations in different lands, but who try their utmost to see those countries.

My cousin's family were well-to-do people of the good city of Covington, Kentucky, and there was no necessity for him to earn a living; but when Tom took a notion into his head, there was no such thing as dislodging it, so at an early age he adopted the sea as a footing for his profession, commencing at the lowest round of the ladder.

The boy reader may be inclined to believe that Tom, being a student of nature, must necessarily be a dry, prosy sort of fellow, and just here I would like to disabuse his mind of such thoughts without further parley.

It has never been my fortune to meet a boy whose love for fun and adventure equaled Tom's. He was honest, candid, and perfectly reliable in all matters, and just at this time his knowledge of Dame Nature's freaks seemed about to come into good play.

But I hear his hearty, well-known tones over my shoulder, saying, "Avast heaving, there, Jack," and I stop immediately, knowing that were I to make an immense chapter out of it, I could never eulogize Tom too much.

For a couple of moments then we hugged one another like bears.

Although both were startled at the sudden meeting, yet Tom's surprise must have greatly exceeded mine, for he had left me attending school some six months before, and now found me a castaway from a Confederate privateer.

When our emotion began to subside a little, I remembered that Tom had not been alone, and asked who the others were.

"Two shipmates of mine, Jack; good fellows, both, I assure you. Shall I tell them to join us?" asked Tom, as he changed once more from a bear to a human being.

"Certainly. Call them up at once," I replied.

My cousin hailed his comrades, and the boys came up, looking the surprise they felt at seeing Tom so intimate with a bloody privateersman, as they took me to be.

Both were sturdy-looking boys, tolerably well-educated, and although the stumpy one, Joe Lackey, had red hair and a badly freckled face, yet he was a good-natured fellow, as was also the taller one, Ned Simmons, who, possessing a better-looking phiz than Joe, was not near so handsome as my model of a cousin, Tom.

The two were dressed in regular sailors' garb; low shoes, white duck pants and dark-blue shirts, but neither of them possessed head-gear, having lost their hats during the gale.

Tom had been third mate of the merchant vessel, and over his blue shirt he wore a fine pea-jacket, and upon his cap could be seen a gold band, for the company believed in uniform.

He was just the one to command a ship, and I had always believed that before he was twenty-two, Tom would be a captain.

The boys were all very hungry, and after pulling up the carpenter's chest, we went into the cave to get supper.

A fire was started outside with dry twigs and branches from the trees near by.

Ned then went off with a bucket, and soon came back with it full of fresh water, which he had obtained above the waterfall.

I showed Tom where the barrel of salt beef was, and opening this with a hatchet taken from the carpenter's chest, he took out a junk, which was put into a pot with water to cover it.

This latter was then suspended over our fire by means of a crane fashioned after the gypsy

style, by means of two stakes with notches in the tops, placed at each side of the fire, and connected above by the ramrod of a musket.

While this was going on, I hauled out one of the hams, and began slicing it. The boys were so very hungry that they ate the smoked ham until the edge of their keen appetites was gone, and then consented to wait for the beef.

When this was at length done, we set to work, and in a short time were ready and willing to cry "enough."

For drink we used the fresh water obtained by Ned, and which tasted splendid after the dubious beverage from the ship's holds.

Supper done, we set to work barring up the mouth of the cave with all our heavy articles, leaving only a small hole to crawl in and out of.

The place itself had evidently been the lair of some wild beast, for in a corner we found a heap of bones, which we pitched into the fire.

Seated inside the "palace," I listened to Tom's story, and learned how he and his companions happened to be on the land, instead of in a watery grave.

When the *Romance* struck the rocks, her masts went by the board, and she began to sink immediately.

As is almost invariably the case, the crew lost their only chance for escape by becoming demoralized and lowering the different boats without due precautions.

They might, some of them, have saved their lives had orders been obeyed, but the greatest disorder prevailed, and, as a natural consequence, both men and officers, afraid of being left behind, crowded into the boats.

The immediate result of this was that the two boats were swamped or smashed against the ship's side, and the fourteen terror-stricken wretches went down to rise no more.

In the beginning, the brave captain had been washed overboard, or his commanding presence might have been sufficient to conduct things more properly.

Our three young friends had kept together ever since the gale came on.

Ned and Joe wanted to get into the boats with the panic-stricken sailors, and Tom had hard work to keep them back, but it was well he did so.

They now began looking around to see what could be done in order to avert the death that stared them in the face, and by making a judicious use of their united strength, the covering of the main hatch was carried to the side of the vessel.

They were just about to throw it into the sea, and trust to their chances of reaching it, when Tom noticed a huge wave coming, one that greatly exceeded in size any that had as yet been felt, for as the *Romance* was raised on the rocks, and had high bulwarks, no wave had as yet swept her decks.

A troop of pigs forward were squealing in a terrible manner, and this was the last sound the boys ever heard from their ship, for the next moment the giant billow swept every loose object from the deck, and the three young fellows, clinging to their novel raft, were in the water, sailing toward the shore at a rate terrible to behold. A loud chorus of squeals from the pigs told that they, too, were shipwrecked, but the rolling waves would have prevented the boys from seeing them, even had they looked, which they had no idea of doing.

They were banged about in quite an alarming manner, being at times lifted on the summit of a mighty billow, and a few seconds later down in the trough of the sea.

A loud sound, almost like a sob, followed by a ripping crash as the deck was torn up by the compressed air beneath, informed the boys that the gallant *Romance* had gone the way of all craft, and was down in her ocean grave.

Suddenly Joe announced that he could touch bottom. As the darkness was too great for them to see the shore, the others would not at first believe him, but a trial sufficed to prove his assertion true.

Another billow came along, carried them many feet, and left the hatch, with the boys clinging to it, on a sandy shore.

Quickly running beyond the reach of the incoming foam-crested waves, they sat down to rest.

All were wet and shivering, and they soon came to the conclusion that the first thing to be done was to get dry.

During the lightning flashes they saw several bodies tumbled about on the waves, but as the storm changed its direction, and we never came across any of them, we concluded that they had been carried off to sea, or sank upon the lee shore of the land.

Greatly to the joy of the three castaways, the rain began to slacken, and soon stopped altogether, while through a break in the clouds they

caught sight of that bright harbinger of hope to the storm-tossed mariner, the Southern Cross.

Crawling under the bushes and among the trees, they managed to get a few armfuls of leaves and sticks, which, being in sheltered nooks, had escaped the rain, and these proved the foundation of a small but nevertheless welcome fire, by the aid of which they dried their clothes as well as was possible, and then slept.

They awoke early in the morning, and hastened down to the beach to see how matters stood, and see whether any of their shipmates had escaped the fury of the storm.

Here they saw the *Pluto* lying to, as they thought. Hidden behind the bushes which grew upon the shore, they saw me standing on the poop-deck, and of course, I was taken for one of the watch.

How little did I think, while gazing upon the shore, engaged in recalling Robinson Crusoe's experience, not many hundred miles from this spot, that my dear cousin was watching me.

Feeling afraid lest the privateer might send a boat on shore for water or fruit, and that they might be captured, they resolved to leave the coast for the time being.

Coming across the stream just above the waterfall, they followed it for a short distance, and then leaving it, went up the hill.

Upon the north side, half way to the top, they had found an abundance of grapes, of which they ate a large amount. I could well understand their hunger at supper time now, knowing that they had tasted nothing but grapes during the day.

But for the fear of meeting some of the privateersmen, they would have been at the beach, hunting for things cast ashore from the wreck.

Late in the afternoon they had resolved to go down at any cost, their stomachs were loudly and ferociously clamoring for food, and substantial they must have, even at the risk of being seen from the blockade-runner.

On rounding the hill, they caught sight of the privateer, but the deserted and curious appearance of her deck excited their greatest curiosity.

They had just reached the stream when they heard me sneeze, greatly to their surprise.

"And now, Jack," said Tom, as he finished his yarn, "how is it I find you in this part of the world, on board of a Confederate privateer, too?"

I thereupon proceeded to elucidate by relating everything that had occurred since the time of Tom's sailing, some six weeks before my own start. The *Romance* had encountered heavy gales on her voyage, and came near sinking while rounding the cape; and this, together with the difference in the sailing qualities of the two ships, had enabled the *Pluto* to overhaul her off the coast of Chili. All the boys listened intently while I spoke, and, as my narrative grew more exciting, their interest, especially Tom's, found vent for itself, now and then, in various whistles, grunts, ejaculations, and pats, all of which made me smile with amusement.

When at length I concluded, many questions were showered upon me, until I had put an end to it by declaring a truce, and saying that I was sleepy. We dropped off into the land of dreams, one after another, and slept soundly during the night, despite the *furor* of excitement which each had labored under.

With the gray dawn, we were upon our feet, and, feeling quite refreshed, we walked down to the beach. The tide was at its ebb, and was flowing toward the ship, which was almost a third of a mile from the shore. Overhead the sky was as clear as on the preceding day, and we knew that Old Sol would soon pour his rays down upon both land and sea, dispelling the coolness that actually made us shiver; and those who had pea-jackets buttoned them up closer than ever.

To our satisfaction the sea was as calm as it could possibly be; and so far the prospects for a fine day were very promising.

We desired to make a visit to the wreck, and knowing that if the tide was to be made a benefit our movements must be expeditious, we hurried to the raft, unmoored it, and then paddled down the stream.

As the action of the water was in our favor, and there were four lusty fellows to paddle, we were not long in reaching the ship, up the side of which we clambered by means of various ropes.

The first thing we did after getting on board, was to stow away a large amount of eatables, for as yet we had taken no breakfast.

After this we held a consultation, and then went to work, adding to the raft until it was over three times as large as before.

Air-tight water casks with the bungs closed, proved an excellent float, and ours, when completed, was capable of holding quite a load.

Rummaging around, we at length got the following things on deck, and from there to the raft.

Three coils of rope, being different sizes; all the cooking utensils on board; a bundle of guns with more ammunition; several dozen knives, forks and spoons, two of the seamen's chests full of the best clothes we could find; a large package of twine; three barrels of flour; two of pickled pork; one ditto of salt beef; one of beans; two of white sugar; two bags of coffee; several boxes of tea; three cheeses; together with miscellaneous articles, such as thread, pins, needles, buttons, etc., which we found in profusion in the cabin.

Our raft was not yet heavily loaded, and we looked around for something else to put on.

While hunting around, my eye fell upon a small brass cannon, mounted with wheels, and which the captain told me was used in one of the boats during a night attack, or when running the blockade.

This we got down on the raft, and found that with the canister, round shot and several kegs of powder from the magazine, our craft was loaded deep enough.

Clambering over the side, we took with us some loose gold, picked up in the state-rooms of the officers, but they had evidently carried any treasure they had away with them.

It was about three in the afternoon when we quitted the vessel, and as we pushed off, Tom remarked:

"This is the last time we'll touch the ship, boys, for yonder comes a storm," pointing to the southern horizon as he spoke.

An interval of just two days between storms; I really began to believe in the *pacific* theory, for in my mind this excelled the stormy Atlantic.

We hastened as much as was expedient, but the raft being heavy and no tide to help us, it was some time before we reached the mouth of our creek.

Landing Joe on one side and Ned on the other, both holding ropes which were attached to the raft, we managed at length, by dint of their pulling and our paddling combined, to land at our cove.

Haste was necessary to land our things and bring them into the cave; but strong arms and willing hearts can accomplish wonders, and in half an hour the thing was done.

Then we proceeded to fasten the raft to rocks and trees with several additional cables.

Hardly had we sheltered ourselves in the cave, before the rain came down in torrents; the wind whistled and shrieked like an enraged demon let loose; the lightning flashed; the thunder rattled on, sounding like salvos of artillery; the waves came rolling up the stream, dashing against the bank with fury.

Outside, they broke upon the reefs with a fearful noise, and I really think but for the protection of the former, half of the island would have been inundated.

The trees creaked and groaned about our cave as though about to give way before the violence of the gale.

Tom piled up the leaves and sticks, and in a few moments we had a comfortable fire, the smoke escaping by means of a draught through several crevices, what little there chanced to be, for the wood was dry, and burned readily.

While this terrible war of the elements was going on outside, we placed our pot on the fire, and were soon engaged in looking after our supper.

This consisted of cold salt beef left from the night before; coffee, very fine but creamless, and some ham, together with an egg apiece, taken from the chicken coop.

CHAPTER V.

BLOWN OUT TO SEA—WE DECIDE TO EXPLORE.

It would seem as though we were all veterans, so far as storms were concerned, for we slept soundly during the night, in spite of the tumult that raged without.

When morning came, it found us on the beach, just at the mouth of the creek, looking upon the scene.

The dark clouds, which at dusk, on the preceding day, covered the sky, had all vanished, and now the heavens were clear, with the exception of a snowy cloud here and there, hastening along as if anxious to join its fellows.

We turned our eyes toward the spot where last we had seen the blockade-runner, but a glance sufficed to tell the truth; nothing met our eyes but the endless waste of water; the *Phuto* had gone.

"Storm's done the work for her," said Ned, "and it was a rouser, too, enough to sink any ship. I'm sorry she's gone, for we might have gotten many more things."

I noticed that Tom was thoughtfully eying the ruffled ocean.

"No, Ned," said he, at length, "I don't think she had a hole knocked in her bottom, for you see she was tightly wedged in between the rocks. If she *did* go to pieces, it's my opinion that the huge waves did the business for her."

"What do you mean by 'if,' and emphasizing *did*? Surely there can be no doubt but what the *Phuto* has gone under. If she had stood the storm, we could see her now, and I'm sure there's no sign there," said I, pointing outward with a smile.

"Well, I have a doubt, and can give it in a nutshell. You see, boys, after you were asleep, I came out of the cave, and found that the storm had passed away, though the wind was still blowing hard. I noticed that the waves were as high as ever, and that the wind came from the south-east. It was from the south when we left the ship, but it had veered several points. Now what I meant by 'if' is just this: The waves were much larger than during the other storm, and they might (mind I don't say they did) have taken the vessel from her bed, as I might say, and carried her out to sea. Now what do you say to that, boys?"

"That it is only an exaggerated guess of yours, Tom," said Joe, frankly, for, although he generally looked to my cousin for advice, and believed in his many philosophical theories, still he always tried to combat them, unsuccessfully, I must own. "Yes," he continued, "I wouldn't be afraid to bet five to one that the *Phuto* went to pieces, for nothing could stand that gale, which was one of the heaviest. Do you take me up—five to one?"

"No, Joey, you know I'm opposed to betting, on principle; and then, again, I'd be too certain of winning. Joe, you must acknowledge that if the vessel did not sail away, she sank not, but was broken up by the waves," laughed Tom, now sure of his case.

"I own up that far; she did not founder, for we battened down the hatches," said Joe, puzzled.

"Then you must see that if she was broken up, pieces of her must have washed ashore."

"I give in, old boy. You have too strong a team for me," said Joe.

"Joseph, my lad, you're never too old to learn. You see there may be articles from the decks, but you can't point out anything from below; that is, the cabins," and Tom looked very sagely at us as he spoke, with the air of a wiseacre.

Joe looked up and down the beach with a very faint hope, indeed, and then shook his head. Booms, spars, tangled rigging, and various like articles were thrown up on the sand, coming from the *Romance*, no doubt, but this was all; no chairs, boxes, or anything that might have been washed out of the *Phuto's* cabin or state-rooms.

It seemed quite probable to all of us now, that the privateer had been blown out to the sea.

Proceeding to our cave after this discussion, we turned the subject by making way with the quickly prepared breakfast.

While engaged in this pleasant occupation, Tom, whom we all looked upon as a sort of leader, assigned to each one his duty for the day. Ned and Joe were to remain at home, and build a hut out of the boards taken from the raft, and picked up on the beach, while Tom and myself were ordained to reach the summit of the hill, and find out whether we had landed on Chili proper, or an outlying island.

Leaving the other two hard at work, pulling the raft to pieces, and carrying the material for the intended cabin up to the cave, we started out. Each had a rifle, a pistol and a knife, and altogether we presented quite a formidable aspect as we ascended the hill.

This we found anything but easy work, for there were several cliffs, totally inaccessible, so far as climbing them was concerned, and these had to be rounded. By means of judicious diverging, and some exertion of strength, we managed at length to reach a point about half way up.

It was just at this time that Tom grasped my arm and pointed upwards in almost a perpendicular direction. By following the line indicated by his extended finger, I soon saw what he wanted me to.

We were nearly at the foot of a high cliff that stood directly in our way, and it was at the summit of this that Tom was pointing.

A very large bird was perched upon a rocky projection that jutted out from the face of the elevation.

Its neck was craned out, and I could see how very curious the bird was about finding the nature of the strange creatures below.

"What is it?" I asked, after gazing in silence at the bird, which remained so stationary that one could almost believe it a part of the rocky barrier.

"A condor from the Andes, Jack. Watch him come down to make a warmer acquaintance;" and as my cousin spoke, he pulled back the hammer of his well-made rifle, and quickly raised that weapon to his shoulder.

"Be careful to keep out of his way, for he is no light weight," added Tom, as he squinted along the shining barrel.

The giant of winged creatures seemed to know by intuition that its life was in danger, even though it might never have seen a gun before, for while Tom was engaged in the act of taking aim it spread those immense pinions, and in another moment would have been cleaving the air in its swift flight.

A sharp, whip-like crack told that the rifle had been fired. I saw a puff of white smoke curling away heavenward, and looked up further to see the bird soaring away on its journey to the Andes, but for once, at least, I reckoned without my host.

Tom was a splendid shot, as I ought to have known, for we had often been out hunting together. But he was not the one to boast of his exploits, though always willing to tell the story.

Struck in a mortal spot, the monarch of winged creatures, so far as size is concerned, after a vain endeavor to retain his position, came fluttering down, and fell with a dull sound at our feet, expiring at once.

This was the first time I had seen a condor, and yet, perhaps, had time been granted me, I might have guessed what it was when on the cliff.

I had many a time read strange stories about their habits and how they were captured, but when it came to a description the reality was so different that I should never have been sure of its identity but for Tom, who had shot them before, and had one stuffed in his cabinet at home.

My cousin had been a sailor for many years, and during this period had visited many strange countries, among which I might mention China, India, South America, the two polar seas, and last of all, our sunny California.

He was hardly five feet ten in height, but had passed through many adventures, and from hard work had become very strong.

This strength, united with a certain quickness and agility that characterized all his movements, made him one who might well be looked upon as a leader, even of veterans, for Tom's head possessed that rarity—brains.

It may seem queer to the reader that I should blunt the edge of my narrative by a digression that is simply a eulogy upon my cousin; but Tom's blushing face over yonder tells me that the tribute had touched a tender point, and the love in my heart for his sterling qualities must now and then find an outlet.

Perhaps eight persons out of nine, who were not regular sharpshooters, would have missed, or at best only wounded the condor as he started to sail away, for his flight is exceedingly rapid.

The requisites of a good marksman are a steady hand and a quick eye, and these qualities were possessed by Tom.

The condor which he had killed measured three feet ten inches from tail to beak, and with extended wings from tip to tip, there was the tremendous distance of nine feet.

We were accurate about this, as we had with us a tape-line, taken from one of the lockers in the *Phuto's* cabin, with which we computed the length and breadth. Stooping over the bird, we examined it as closely as possible.

In color, it was a glossy black, dusted here and there with gray, which made it have the appearance of old age, though such was not the case.

There were several white spots on the wings, and what Tom called a ruff of downy feathers encircling the base of its neck.

Both the head and neck were bare, being entirely destitute of feathers, and the skin covering these parts, coarse and wrinkled, of a dull reddish color, with a slightly perceptible tinge of purple.

The tail was broad and well-shaped, probably to guide the condor in his flight through the aerial regions.

In my humble estimation, it was not a very pretty bird, although the largest I had ever seen, not even excepting many large stuffed hawks and eagles.

We each pulled out several feathers to remember the bird by, and then resumed our way upward, aiming for the summit of the hill.

Being really indefatigable climbers, we soon rounded and gained the top of the craggy elevation, which we concluded to call "Condor Cliff," as we had already decided to call our possessions "Shelter Island," in case our tour of observation should prove it to be surrounded by water.

From our position we could see the two boys industriously at work in front of the cave, and

they were not long in discovering us in our elevated position.

They waved their hats and shouted to us, as we afterwards found out, although just then the wind was contrary, and we heard nothing.

Tom reloaded the rifle which had caused Mr. Condor's death, and then we continued our way onward.

As we walked along, he related to me, a willing listener, several anecdotes about condors and their general habits, while I responded with things found in the wonderful book of natural history which had been alongside of Robinson Crusoe, and the works on navigation on the captain's shelf.

Tom wondered greatly at finding a bird of this species on our hill, as they, generally speaking, prefer some beetling crag on the summit of a high mountain.

He stated merely as a supposition that this one had come some distance, and was resting on the top of the cliff; as we saw no more condors during our stay, we concluded that he was right in his conjecture.

Reaching the last tree, which we eyed closely, as it was tall, and would make a good signal-pole, we could see the grand old Pacific in three directions, north, west and south.

It was easier to travel now, and we were not long in reaching the very summit of the hill.

With an eagerness not to be expressed in words, we peered over the rounded top towards the east.

However, we were doomed to disappointment, at least I was, having possessed sanguine hopes of its being the main land.

Water—water everywhere; miles upon miles of it, glittering in the beams of the glorious sun, and surrounding completely the land on which we had been castaway.

Boy Crusoes in every sense of the word we undoubtedly were.

Is it very surprising, dear reader, that for some time we looked around us without saying a word?

Cast away upon this strange island, with thousands of miles of land and water separating us from all we held dear, is it a wonder that our hearts grew heavy for a time? But this could not last long; the natural buoyancy of our spirits soon came back, and in ten minutes we were earnestly discussing our plans for the future, and taking a pleasure in it that seemed singular indeed, when contrasted with our recent despondency.

Tom pointed away toward the east, and, upon looking closely, I discovered that what I had given a casual glance, thinking it to be a cloud, was in reality one of the high peaks of the Andes.

We were within sight of the coast after all, and now my hopes began to rise again.

In time we could easily build a boat, provision her, and, reaching the shore, run northward to Valparaiso or Santiago, taking a passage from one of these ports in some homeward-bound vessel.

Through the spy-glass which we brought along, the mountains were distinctly visible, and we could see many things to interest us; but we soon turned to survey the island from our lofty lookout.

The hill was very nearly in the center of the island from east to west, and about two-thirds of the whole distance from the southern end, being close to the northern extremity. A sloping, sandy beach ran about three-fourths of the way around the place, and the remainder of the shore was invisible from our seat of survey. All of the lowland, excepting the beach, of course, and most of the hill, was covered with many different kinds of trees, formed into groves, with here and there a glade between, Nature's own unapproachable work. Among these trees we recognized—Tom, from both reading and experience, myself from the former alone—several that would prove very useful to us during our stay upon the island. This island may have been about three miles long by half as broad, although we never found ourselves capable of judging it.

At the foot of the hill, and to the southwest of it, was a beautiful little gem of a lake, measuring about a cable's length (720 feet) from one end to the other, having its lovely shores thickly lined with trees and bushes that overhung the water, except in certain patches where the white sand revealed a beach similar to that washed by old ocean.

The stream that ran past the mouth of our cave was the outlet of this lake of which I had heard something from the boys, but being too intent in securing supplies from the Pluto, could not find time to visit it.

We set on the hill for half an hour resting and cooling off in the fresh breeze that came from the southwest.

At length we decided to explore the island, and

for this purpose descended on the eastern side of the hill, rounding a small precipice that began at the summit.

Hundreds of birds were fluttering about in the trees, some of which excited our admiration on account of their brilliant plumage.

Refreshing ourselves with a cool drink of water, dipped out of a spring that bubbled up from under a stone, we continued our way downward until the lake was reached.

Upon the surface of this we found large flocks of water-fowl, and managed to bag a brace by two well-timed shots.

Down among the trees near the lake the birds were more numerous than before, and among them we discovered the many-colored Chilian woodpecker and the beautiful macaw.

We also scared up a couple of dirty-looking vultures from the body of some animal that looked like a wolf, though smaller.

Taking our wild ducks with us we passed through the groves, and at length came in sight of the seashore.

At this point we found it quite rocky, a fact we had not noticed from the hilltop.

Emerging from the shelter of the trees we saw long rows of tall, white-breasted birds, looking very much like soldiers at a distance; and as I had read about and seen them before, I did not need Tom to tell me that they were penguins, although the number staggered me.

There were two kinds before us, one of which was the crested, and the other what naturalists call the Patagonian penguins.

This latter is so called on account of great numbers being found on the barren shores of Patagonia and Fire Island, while the former, of course, is named from the crest on its head.

The common ones greatly predominated, there being four of them to one of the prettier-crested birds.

CHAPTER VI.

SCARING UP A BEAR—A TROOP OF PIGS—TWO AT A BLOW—A STRANGE BIRD—THE LAUGHING HAWK—A SUPPER FIT FOR A KING—FISHING ON A LOG.

LEAVING the beach, we again struck into the forest, and for some time strolled aimlessly around, seeing several things which tended to make us believe that the island we were cast away on, had once been part of the mainland, and that at no distant day, becoming separated from it in some mysterious manner, perhaps by the action of earthquakes.

While walking along, a deep growl sounded on our right, followed speedily by a noise such as would be made by some heavy animal crashing along, heedless of its steps.

Upon looking in that direction we saw, greatly to our astonishment, a large brown bear "seudding off under bare poles," as Tom afterwards laughingly expressed it.

So surprised, and I might say, startled were we at the sight, that not a gun was thought of until too late, for Bruin had vanished.

The fact that there were bears, and in all probability other wild animals on the island, disturbed us not a little, and we resolved to be very careful about arming ourselves in the future.

Our suspicion about this place having once been a part of the mainland, was strengthened by the sight of this animal, and almost became a conviction; for how else could the bear have reached it?

Surely not by swimming, for the distance was many miles, and this theory was a moral impossibility; and after reaching this conclusion, we let the subject drop.

Turning to the left, we began to go around the base of the hill, intending, by using a circuitous route, to come upon the boys at their work.

We had reached a group of oak trees, and were passing through them, when a melancholy grunt reached our ears; and, upon investigating, we found a drove of very dirty pigs wallowing in a marshy spot under the trees.

This unexpected, and I might say, homelike sight so astonished us, that we were inclined to believe that the island was an inhabited one after all; but a second look, more careful than the first, at the objects of our scrutiny, made my cousin exclaim:

"Dash my tophights, as old Clewline Charley used to say, if I don't believe they're the very same pigs we had on board the *Romance*; but how did they come here? Count heads, Jack, and see if they tally. Eleven? That's the exact number. I'm all twisted up. Yes, there's the old lady, the ancestor of the generation. They were meant for fresh meat for the Californians, but we'll have them now."

"Can a pig swim?" I asked, laughing.

"Well that's where I own myself beaten," said

Tom, reflectively scratching his head with the tip of his finger, as he naturally did when puzzled; "however I believe they can, though it couldn't have done them any good on the wreck, for the waves were rough I tell you. No doubt they were carried away by that monster billow, and landed near us. The greatest wonder after all, I think, is that we never suspected it."

"They seem to take life easy," and Tom laughed heartily as he surveyed the wallowing pigs.

"Shall we leave them alone, or make a pen?" I asked.

"A pen by all means. Then the stock will increase; whereas, if left out here, the bears will soon make short work of them. Let's drive them home," said Tom.

"If they're tame enough, let's start 'em up," I replied.

The swine being gluttled with roots and acorns, and quite domesticated, arose, grunting, to their feet at our approach, and stumbled on before us.

When, at length, we reached the vicinity of the cave, we found that during our absence Ned and Joe had erected quite a substantial and commodious cabin, and were hammering inside; so we gave a yell to bring them out, which ruse being successful, they were rendered motionless by the sight.

"Our swine, by the blue boar of Hungary!" ejaculated Joe, cutting a caper.

Ned was equally well pleased with our capture, and desired us to relate the adventure at once; but wise Tom said the story would keep until after supper, for there was work to do while daylight lasted, as the pigs must have some kind of shelter.

The sun was yet quite a distance above the level profile indicating the western horizon, and we knew there was over an hour left us; so, throwing on our coats, we joined the others, and set to work with a will. Many pieces of boards and spars had been left over from the house, and these were now put to the best possible use, being speedily formed into a strong pig-sty. As there was time to spare, we also considerably made them a yard, surrounding quite a patch of ground by nailing boards from tree to tree. Luckily, there was a grove of oak trees near our cabin, and Tom had chosen this for the pig's palace, for they could eat and grow fat from the accumulated mass of acorns upon the ground.

Supper over, (and one fit for a prince, too) we sat around the fire, talking over our prospects and forming plans. Tom and myself had noticed many marks made by wild goats on the sides of the hill, and at one time caught sight of a group of the timid animals, but could not get close enough for a shot. Believing that they would most likely sleep in caves like our own, and of which we had seen several during our trip, we determined to follow our illustrious predecessor, Robinson Crusoe's plan, capturing some and taming them. The first thing to be done in the morning would be to make a house for our fowls; they had been shut up for many weeks, and wanted freedom badly. As we could get no more it behooved us to be very careful of the dozen we had.

When I awoke the next morning, Tom and Ned were already up, busily engaged in preparing breakfast; and no doubt the rich perfume from the browning had awakened me, for Joe opened his eyes a moment later, sniffing the air furiously.

When the cravings of nature were satisfied, we put the remainder of the fowls away to serve for a future meal, and then sought for a good place where we could build our hen-house.

Upon reaching our pig-sty, we were surprised to see the tracks of several wild animals in the soft mud around it.

By a close examination we picked out a bear's marks; but there were other strange ones, of a different nature, which puzzled us sadly.

The sight of these tracks convinced us that there were several species of wild beasts upon the island, and warned us never to go far away from the cave, unless fully armed.

Finding a proper site beside the pig-pen, we set to work, and in an hour had built a commodious and substantial house for the poultry, in which we placed several long perches, a board, slanting down with small pieces nailed thereon in lieu of a ladder, and half a dozen boxes for laying.

Nothing was now wanting but a yard into which the fowls could enter from their house by means of a square hole near the ground, and to procure material for this, Tom told us to follow him into the woods.

Reaching a thicket of tall canes in a marshy spot, we cut as many as we could carry, and returned with them to the coop.

It took us but a short time to form them into a yard, and into this we put the twenty-two hens and two cocks.

Of course they were delighted with their new quarters after being shut up in a box so long

and began scratching after the multitudinous worms.

My three comrades then went off with spade, pick and shovel, to find a cave that was frequented by goats, and made a pit-trap in front of it.

They also intended putting up a signal-pole of distress upon the very summit of the hill.

Left alone, I proceeded to examine our stock of guns, cleaning and loading those that needed it, and gazing with interest at our pigs and fowls in their respective quarters.

The pigs were rooting at the foot of a tree, and proving their right to the title of gluttons by the manner in which they crammed down the acorns. Just as I was putting a cap upon the nipple of a musket, after having loaded it, I heard the queerest, shrillest laugh that ever fell upon my ears.

Startled, and somewhat surprised, I turned around, expecting to see one of my companions issue forth from behind a tree, having returned for some articles forgotten in the hurry of their departure.

No one was in sight, however, and I once more put my attention upon the gun, wondering the while whether I could have mistaken a cry from one of the roosters for a laugh.

The theory seemed plausible, and I was fast forgetting the cause of my alarm, when again that fearful, diabolical laugh, as I might express it, came to my ears.

This time there could be no mistake. It seemed to come from the air above me, and could not proceed from a human throat.

At this very instant the gallant cocks sounded notes of warning, and the terrified hens began rushing pell-mell through the small opening into the house for safety.

Something descended with a great velocity into the yard; there was a great fluttering for a moment, and then a large, white bird came flying up, bearing in its talons one of our precious chickens.

I could only guess what species it belonged to; but my want of knowledge did not deter me from throwing the heavy musket to my shoulder, glancing along the shining barrel, and pressing the trigger.

I had loaded it with half a dozen buckshot, and perhaps it was lucky I did so, for, to an amateur marksman like myself, it would have been a marvelous shot to have hit this flying bird.

I do not say the feat would have been an impossible one, even for myself to perform, as I had seen some practice, but I do affirm that, in a case like this, six bullets are better than one, making a certainty of a hazard.

The bird was just flying off as the musket sounded, but the buckshot brought it to the ground. As it was not dead, I hastened up, and had to give it several smart raps with the ramrod before it gave up the ghost.

The hen was stone dead, and bringing both of them up to the house, I left them there for future examination. One of the backshot had passed entirely through the domestic fowl, breaking the bird of prey's wing, and causing it to fall. Not wishing to have any more of the poultry killed or carried away by the savage denizens of the air, I shut them within their house. They were worth more than their weight of gold to us, and could not be replaced in case of death. After doing this, I proceeded to finishing the job with the guns, and then looked at my victims.

In form, the bird of prey certainly looked very familiar, having the talons, crooked beak, head, and general shape of the hawks I had seen in my native New England forests. The color mystified me, however, and I gave up the struggle, for in this respect it differed from any hawk I had ever seen in menagerie or bird fancier's shop. Instead of the gray or black, this bird was very nearly pure white.

After looking critically at it for awhile, and indulging in some Yankee guessing, I put it, together with the dead hen, behind a pile of firewood, near the cabin door, intending to have a little fun with the others when they came home. I felt sure Tom would know to what species it belonged.

During the day, while putting things to rights in the cabin and cave, which were in fact one long apartment, I cudged my brain to devise some means by which we might get rid of the wild animals that prowled around our pig-pen; and recollections of my former trapping exploits made me get quite excited over the idea, so much so that I could do very little work.

Towards evening the three boys came home, hungry and tired, having worked hard all day, and eaten very little dinner.

They said a cave had been found, which, judging from the marks around it, appeared to be greatly frequented by the goats; and directly in front of it the boys had dug a pit with the tools brought for that purpose.

The ground proving soft, they made it some ten feet in depth, and also wide enough to prevent any goat from jumping over.

On the bottom, soft branches were placed to break the fall.

No goat could possibly enter the cave without passing over the pit, which the boys covered with long, thin sticks, so artfully sprinkled with dirt that the sharpest eyes could not discover it, and then the three workers united in pronouncing it perfect.

When the goats desired to enter the cave in the evening, they would have to pass over the pit, and the sticks being very slender in the center—made so by the boys' knives—would at once give way, and the animals be precipitated to the bottom, where they would remain in safety until we came for them.

"Guess what I shot to-day, boys?" I asked, when Tom finished speaking.

"We heard your gun go off with a bang, and wondered if the savages had attacked you. Was it the bear we saw yesterday, Jack?" queried Joe.

"Look here," said I; and putting my hand behind the wood I drew out the mutilated hen, gravely holding it up to view. "What kind of a varmint do you call that, Tom, as our friend Kennebec Kit would say?"

To say the boys were thunderstruck, would not be expressing it too highly, for their eyes spoke of more than astonishment.

They expected me to haul out some strange beast, who had threatened to devour me, boots and all; and now they found themselves gazing upon a poor hen.

It was too much for Tom's gravity, and a moment later he broke into a hearty laugh.

"Young man, what's this? Been practicing, Jack? Was the innocent chick about to emigrate to some distant clime, or did you mistake it for some ravenous bird of prey?" and Tom winked curiously, while the others fairly roared.

"Laugh and grow fat, boys. It's the best thing you can do in this dreary world of sin, so the preacher says. But before you quite explode, Tom, I'll be ever so much obliged if you would tell me the nature of this winged monster?" and to the utter demoralization of the laughing fellows, I slapped out the strange bird, and held it up before them.

Tom gave a long glance and then exclaimed:

"Ah! the mystery stands revealed. A hawk!"

"What! a white hawk?" I ejaculated, for he had spoken the very idea I had thought of, but which I feared to mention, not wanting to be ridiculed.

"The very same. This is what naturalists call the laughing hawk," said Tom.

"I heard it," I put in briefly, not wishing to speak of my alarm.

"And, I may venture to say, was somewhat puzzled. Why didn't you look in that wonderful book of yours, Jack? It would have told you all about it, I reckon. Fetch it out here now. There, you see I spoke the truth. I wonder at its swooping down upon a fowl, as they generally live on fish and reptiles. There must be a good many of these fellows around our lake. You see, boys," said Tom, referring to the book, and looking very wise, "it is white, except on the back and wings, and near its beak, which is short and sharp. Also notice this crest upon its head, making it look quite pretty. Now, Jack, remember these fellows are hawks, even though they do laugh."

"I'm not going to forget in a hurry; but come to supper, boys," I said; "but did you put up the signal pole?"

"No, we hadn't time. It'll keep, I suppose, until to-morrow," remarked Joe.

The hawk, being worthless, we had thrown away; but the hen was kept, as it had been killed by my bullet, and was therefore fit for food.

A large seamen's chest served us for a table, and as we were not at all fastidious in our tastes, it answered our purpose admirably.

With them the boys had brought some grapes from the side of the hill, and these, together with ham, sea-biscuits, cheese, cold duck, and boiled beans, formed a supper to be envied.

As we ate, our commander-in-chief gave his orders for the following day.

"Jack," said he, with a mouthful of duck, "I would like you to try fishing to-morrow. Just now, nothing could be better than fresh fish with egg sauce. Ugh! My mouth fairly waters for it. Inside the reefs, beyond the mouth of the creek, would be a fine place, if I am any judge. Ned and Joe will go to the very top of our peak, and put up the signal-pole, not forgetting the red bunting and ax, like we did this morning. We must make haste about this thing for it would be a shame if a ship passed without our seeing her, or any one on her deck knowing there were castaways on this island. Now, boys, what say you to this?" And Tom disposed of a

huge piece of cheese with the air of a philosopher, though I doubt if such a grave personage would have eaten this dreamy, nightmare-giving article at supper.

"Certainly," responded Joe, "but won't you go along?"

"I guess I'll take my turn home. I can fix up around here, making a stove, and several other things. And whatever you do, don't forget the guns. Even our bears would be unpleasant to meet."

After finishing our supper, we prepared and cooked the hen, intending to have it for breakfast, together with a duck.

For a long time we sat and talked.

The boys told several very exciting sea stories, and, of course, I listened with profound attention.

At length our eyes began to grow heavy, and we tumbled into the fancy hammocks brought from the privateer.

The sun was rising when we emerged into the open air on the following morning, for, though the hill hid his genial face, still we could see the golden rays glancing from the tiny waves to the north of the island.

Not a cloud marred the beauty of the heavens, and we felt sure that the day, after opening with such propitious indications, must be a beautiful one.

The tracks around the pig-pen made me think of traps, and I told Tom what I had been planning the day previous.

Our breakfast having been hastily despatched, we set about preparing for the several jobs which were to be done on this day.

Joe and Ned started away with dinner in their pockets; guns and hatchets over their shoulders, and a coil of slender but tough rope.

They also carried a long piece of red bunting which was found in one of the sea-chests.

I made an article which perhaps insulted the name of umbrella; but the spread canvas would prove very useful in keeping off the hot rays of the sun.

I took my gun and ammunition, dinner, an oar, bait and fishing-hooks and lines, which were in my pocket providentially at the time of my capture.

Going down the creek I came to where it joined the sea, and here I determined to make a stand. Upon looking around I espied a large log, and this I began rolling toward the water.

Upon launching it I found my venture was perfectly seaworthy, it being dead wood, and very light, hence, sinking only half way under.

On three of its sides the island was defended by a rocky barrier, and against these reefs the waves, when at all high, broke with a continuous roar. In several places there were openings in this line of breakers, which were, generally speaking, from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty yards from the shore; and one of these, quite large too, was directly beyond the creek.

It was through this inlet that the boys had come on the main hatch covering, on the night of the wreck, and myself afterwards on the raft.

Had the merchant vessel gone twenty yards further on, she would have passed through in safety; but fate willed otherwise.

CHAPTER VII.

A STRING OF FISH—NO CRABS CAUGHT—WHAT AN ALBATROSS IS FOOLISH ENOUGH TO DO—THE SKULL-SPLITTER—ADVENTURE WITH A SHARK—THE GUN AND LOG TRAPS—OUR FIRST GOATS.

OUTSIDE this line of breakers the water was calm, but beyond we could see the light breeze forming petty waves. With a strap I fastened the rifle to my back, and then mounted the log, pushing off and paddling with the oar.

I was delighted with my impromptu craft, for the light log went almost as smoothly as a boat.

After going a short distance from the beach, I set down a line to ascertain the depth of the water, and finding that it was about right, I baited the three hooks fastened to it, and threw it out on the right side of the log.

My remaining line I cast on the left side, doing this in order to keep them from interfering with each other. Both were strong, having done me good service in the Roads at home, and I had no fear of catching a Tartar, in the shape of a fish large enough to break my line.

Having thus managed to suitably arrange my lines, I busied myself for a few moments in putting up my queer umbrella, fastened it to the blade of the oar, and then keeping it over my head by thrusting the latter into a crack that seemed very accommodating.

Hardly had I finished placing the sunshade over my head, when I noticed the line thrown out first jerking about in a very significant manner,

and knowing that there was a method in its seeming madness, I proceeded to haul it in. This I did, hand over hand, and rather slowly too, for the fish proved very stubborn.

As I pulled, I noticed the second line giving indications of good luck, and this excited me not a little, but I landed, or to use a more appropriate term, logged the one I was at work on first, it proving to be a fine fellow, resembling a had-dock.

I had a piece of cord in my pocket, and taking it out, I soon fastened the captive at one end by passing it through mouth and gill, and then tying it.

Then he was lowered into the water, with the other end of the cord fastened to the log, in order to prevent his getting away.

Quickly baiting the hook, I cast it from me, and the line was now in working order again.

All this time, the other fellow had been kicking up quite a rumpus with his splurges and pulls, being doubtless impatient for a heaving.

I was now ready for him, and soon had him alongside of his comrade in misery.

In appearance, both of these fish that had been inveigled on the hook by the attractive look of the bait, were alike as regarded their species, although the first one certainly weighed the heaviest.

For almost two hours I fished; and at the end of that time, after twenty minutes' patient waiting, I found that the denizens of the mighty deep had ceased nibbling; so I proceeded to count trophies.

There were seven of the kind spoken of before, and two more of a different species, the largest weighing between three and four pounds, and the smallest of the lot about two.

Knowing, from my reading, that there were many crabs about Chili, I determined to make an effort to obtain some, not yet being aware of the fact that they were mostly on the beach, preferring this to the water, and in this particular being different from those around Florida.

I had not seen any that morning, for they come out with the sun, and that luminary had not made his appearance above the island when I reached the beach.

Taking up my lines, I began to prepare for the crabs.

It took but a few moments to form my kerchief into a sort of landing-net, by fastening the corners to a couple of sticks which I managed to obtain from the log.

This article of apparel, being an unusually large one, such as jolly Jack tars are accustomed to wear around their necks, would do in lieu of a better one.

Moving the log nearer the shore, I fastened a small piece of red flannel to that end of a line which did not have the hooks on it, and then lowered into the water.

The umbrella I had taken down in order to use the oar; and, having used the latter, I again erected my sunshade.

While waiting for a bite, I amused myself by digging a hole with my knife in the log just in front of me.

As the wood was rotten with age, and therefore soft, I found no difficulty in making quite a respectable cavity.

When sitting so comfortable in the shade, gazing down into the sparkling water, I heard a shrill scream in the air above me, and glancing upwards, saw a huge albatross sailing majestically by.

I watched him for several moments, wondering at the same time what he could be doing in this region, for it is not often we find this bird so far north on the Chilian coast, they preferring the region of the cape.

He was soon lost sight of behind my umbrella (pardon the insult, must respectable umbrella-makers), and resumed my former occupation of gazing down into the water, and thinking rather dubiously of my slim chances for crabs.

A few moments later I was aroused from the reverie which my occupation and the heat of the day had caused me to fall into, by a tremendous noise behind me, and before I could turn to ascertain the cause of the racket, something gave me such a ferocious blow that I nearly fell from my seat into the water.

It was only by a great effort and a ready self-possession that this catastrophe was avoided; and when I had once regained my seat, I looked in front, toward the reefs, for a terrible noise came from that direction.

The sight that met my eyes was truly ridiculous, and I actually shook with laughter while gazing upon it.

As I saw at a glance, the huge albatross had swooped down from my rear upon my impromptu umbrella, and having no doubt aimed correctly, had struck the centre with commendable precision.

Its head had gone through, and just at the base

of the neck it stuck; the body and wings being too large.

The albatross had swooped down upon this strange object—which seemed to have excited both its curiosity and ire—with considerable force; but the tough canvas proved a little too much for it.

There was the bird, now greatly frightened, flying away with my umbrella, and uttering shrill cries of alarm.

As its head was caught in the canvas, it could not escape from its dangerous position, and the predicament into which its extreme foolishness had drawn it, seemed about to be the cause of its death.

Vainly it tried to fly upwards. Had the umbrella been fastened upon its feet it might easily have done so, for the albatross is a very strong bird, and can do almost incredible things.

The weight being all upon its neck, its head was drawn down in such a manner that in a few moments it was swimming upon the water.

It did not take long for the canvas to get soaked; and then began a struggle between it and the bird for victory that it has never been my fortune to see equaled.

For almost half an hour the unequal combat went on, and at the end of this time the albatross was completely tired out, as its wings now and then became entangled in the folds of its enemy.

The long pinions beat the air more slowly every moment, and at length the gallant bird began to sink, dragged down by its stubborn enemy.

The albatross is at times a very dangerous bird, as it often descends with great violence upon the heads of swimmers and floating objects which attract its attention.

In some climes this peculiarity has gained for it the name of Skull-splitter.

It was with mingled interest and compassion that I watched the vain efforts of this great bird to escape, and the latter feeling predominating, I would have gone to its rescue but for the fact that it had carried off my only means of doing so, in the shape of the oar.

And then again it would have been a risky job, for those long pinions beat the water with the force of a steam engine or a threshing-machine, and a blow on the head from this source would give me my quietus.

Both canvas and bird at length vanished; and then, the interest having subsided with their disappearance, and realizing that to continue my fruitless task of fishing for crabs was entirely useless, I gave up the project in despair, and began making toward the shore, using my hands in the place of the missing oar.

With such propellers, my passage was, of course, not very rapid; but it was sufficiently so for my purpose.

While busily engaged in this manner, something that looked like the back fin of a fish attracted my attention some yards away; but before I could examine it closely I found that it had gone.

A moment later I saw something white just below my hand, and naturally I drew that very useful member from the water.

It was lucky I did so, for the white object came to the surface, and proving to be a very large fish which I immediately recognized as a shark, made a grab at my hand.

I shuddered as the two terrible rows of teeth came together, and fearing that he might make a grab at my legs, I drew them up and stood upon the log, holding the string of fish in my hand.

Instead of going away after missing this tender morsel for a dinner, as I had thought it would, the shark kept swimming around the log as if keeping watch over me.

What was to be done? I dared not put my hand into the water, for fear of having it bitten off and it seemed that I would have to stand upon the log until rescued or the shark grew weary of his vigil.

This I did not want to do; for besides the mortification consequent upon being found in this strange situation by my comrades, there was to be added my very uncomfortable position, which was also insecure, as a sudden jolt would precipitate me into the water, and then I would become food for my enemy, being no pearl-diver.

I was growing desperate and meditating upon the chances of Tom's hearing me, should I shout, when a simple remedy presented itself.

My head came in contact with the stock of my gun, and I could not but grin (as no other word would cover the ground) at the thought of thus being enabled to easily settle the case of Shark vs Merton.

Taking it from my back I slipped in several extra bullets in order to make sure work of the matter, and then pulled back the hammer. A slight splashing sufficed to bring the marine monster to the spot, open-mouthed and hungry.

I proved too quick for him, however, and stand-

ing up, discharged the contents of my gun down his capacious maw.

Whether the shark was killed or not, I never knew; but certain it was, however, that he sank out of sight at once, going down like a lump of lead; the water for many yards around, was tinged with his blood, and it was never my fortune or misfortune to set eyes on him afterwards.

Now that I had got rid of the guard, it took me but a short time to reach the shore; upon reaching which, I proceeded to load my gun, for Tom had told us to keep that weapon in serviceable order at all times, and I can say that during our stay upon the Island, we never suffered from following this advice.

While going up the sandy beach, I was surprised and amused to see thousands of crabs rushing hither and thither; in fact, the whole beach seemed to be alive with them.

All of them appeared to be of the same species, and had a large claw in front, which they would hold up in a threatening manner upon retreating, at my approach.

Ensconcing themselves in their snug holes they would watch with those sharp little eyes until I got by, and then once again make their appearance upon the scene.

I had not seen any of these crabs near the creek, and afterwards found out that they only frequented certain portions of the beach.

As they were totally unlike any I had ever seen before, I did not make an attempt at capture, and it is doubtful if I could have accomplished this without great labor.

So, with the heavy string of fish in my hand, I tramped along the creek, and up the shore of this until I came within sight of our cabin.

The back of it being towards me, I could not see Tom, but I heard the busy rattle of a hammer, and knew that he must be engaged on something.

Rushing forward with a shout, I presented myself before him, and holding up in triumph my beauties of the finny tribe.

Pride generally fills the heart of a successful hunter or fisherman at well-deserved praise, and I felt happy when I saw Tom's pleased looks as he gazed upon my trophies, and then asked me to put them in the water until we had time to perform the necessary operation upon them.

Throwing the fish into the creek, I secured the other end of the line to a stake driven deeply into the ground, and then going over to where my cousin was, I threw off my coat preparatory to work.

Tom was making a place in which to confine any goats we might capture, and entering heart and hand into the work, we were not long in finishing it.

There was a medium-sized, though rather rough-looking cave, not many yards distant from the pig-pen, and Tom had calculated upon making this the headquarters for the expected goats.

He had already fixed a strong door to this cave, when I put in an appearance, and half finished an inclosure in front of it, where we might leave the animals during the day.

Working steadily, we were soon through with the job, and everything was ready for occupancy, when my watch told it was just four o'clock.

After washing up a little in the brook, we stood in front of our residence.

"Have you been working on the pen all day, Tom?" I queried.

"No, not quite," replied he, smiling. "Please to examine the chicken-yard, Jack."

I did so, and was surprised to discover that he had put a nice roof on to it, made from canes, and the fowls were at that moment scratching lustily in the yard, as if fully aware that they were henceforth safe from the depredations of all hawks and other birds of prey.

The pigs were lying down under the trees, full of acorns, and seemingly well contented with their lot.

Just then I bethought me of something, and pointing to the tracks around the palace, inquired:

"How about these, Tom?"

"I've been busy thinking about those traps while at work, and can't make out anything new. We might form a common figure four, and put a log in it. Then again we might attempt a gun-trap, as we have plenty of spare muskets. Have you any choice on the subject?" asked Tom.

"My preference lies with the gun-trap; but why not try both?" I answered, for I felt a natural curiosity to see how they would work, never having tried the last one he had mentioned, and the other with only a box instead of a log.

Tom readily assented to this proposal, as he always did when I wished anything; so we began to get ready for our midnight visitors.

While I hunted around for a log, Tom whittled

out a figure four and as I wot not but what every one of my boy readers is familiar with the peculiar, though ingenious, construction of these sticks, I will not attempt to describe them, contenting myself with saying that they were necessarily a great deal larger and stronger than those generally used, as the log must be a heavy one.

When I had found a suitable log, and cut the ends smooth (for good looks only, as it was not needed, and the log would doubtless have done just as much service with ragged ends as when the latter were shaped with the ax), Tom was done his job, and together we rolled it close to the pig-pen. Then it was ingeniously arranged so that a bear or any other large animal would have to go pretty far under the log in order to get the bait.

This had been done, by placing the meat close to the wall of the palace, and not even a weasel could get it without first crawling under.

Having finished this trap, we set to work on the other one. Two walls of stones, each about five feet high, were built, with a couple of feet between them.

Then taking a heavy musket, we fastened it firmly at one end of this alley, the muzzle pointing at the other terminus, and aiming at the center.

After securing it in this way, we tied a stout piece of cord to the trigger, and bringing it back, passed it around a stake which was driven into the ground behind the gun, for this very purpose.

The cord was then carried forward through the passage, and ended about a foot from the muzzle of the musket.

To this end the bait, in the shape of some meat, was secured, and then the trap was ready, all but the loading of the gun. Its working was plain enough.

We had so arranged the passage that the night prowler would have to come in at the end to get the meat. When this latter was seized, the string and consequently the trigger of the gun would be pulled, and the latter instrument discharged.

After trying the trap several times in order to see if it would work well, we left it, intending to put the charge in the musket before going to bed.

Just as we turned away, a tremendous shouting on the hillside attracted our attention, and upon looking up we discovered Joe and Ned coming rapidly down, and holding a sturdy-looking goat between them, while two pretty little kids in the rear were following their mother.

Although both boys were lusty fellows, yet they had just about all they could attend to in holding, besides the animals, their guns and working implements.

When we turned the lot into the inclosure, they expressed their thanks at being thus relieved.

With all her strength the old goat tried to butt a hole through the wall, but the stones proved too much for her, and at length, as if quite certain that she had found an opening through which she might make her escape, she darted into the cave, followed by the two loving little kids.

Sliding into the inclosure, Tom shut and barred the door, but old nanny did not like the idea of being thus imprisoned, and she forthwith began to make quite a row over the matter.

It was useless, however, for the door would not budge worth a cent, as Tom had been careful to make it very stout.

Laughing at her futile efforts, we turned our backs upon the inclosure, and a moment afterwards the two boys were looking attentively at the traps. Never having seen one of any kind before, they admired them greatly, and their words of commendation were both long and loud.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLIMBING THE ROPE—THE GUN-TRAP'S VICTIM—A SPECTACLE BEAR—OUR DEFUNCT COYPU—SOME NATURAL HISTORY—CATCHING A TARTAR—THE MOST DELICATE DISH ON RECORD—JOE'S ESCAPE—A PERFECT FIEND IN MINIATURE.

"How about the signal-pole, boys?" I asked. "Perhaps if you get on top of the house you can see it," returned Ned.

Tom and I immediately clambered up to the roof of our cabin, and by stretching our necks in a manner fearful to behold, managed to catch a glimpse of the red bunting floating in the stiff breeze.

We afterwards found out that when standing at our landing-place by the creek, both pole and flag were in plain view without any extra exertion.

"What about the fish, Tom? Think they'll keep until morning?" I queried.

"They would be better for supper, I suppose.

All of us can go to work and do the job in a jiffy," said Tom; and, as the desire of the rest ran in the same direction, we unanimously resolved to make a supper of half of them.

Cleaning the fish was anything but nice work, and many girls (at least Jack Merton can vouch for his sister) would turn up their noses at the thought, although they manage to behave creditably while the eating process is going on.

It happened that all of us were sailors and if a seaman never had anything worse than this to do, his life would certainly be rendered more cheerful, and a greater part of the proverbial "growling" be done away with.

If any class of people on this globe have a cause for growling, it is the mariners. Many a time, after a day of hard work, (for captains are generally on the lookout for work, and sooner than see a man idle would make work for him, or set him to scraping rust from the cable) a storm comes on at dusk, and the tired sailors in their hammocks or bunks, before they have had a wink of sleep, hear that hated cry:

"All hands on deck to shorten sail."

There is no such thing as shirking duty; tired or not, every man of them has to "tumble out lively now," and hasten above, there to work perhaps the whole night in wind or rain, sleet or snow. Such is the life of a sailor, entirely different from what some stories would have you believe, but nevertheless true in nine cases out of ten.

Boys often run away to sea, but they see too much in about a fortnight, and wish themselves home again.

To resume the thread of my narrative. Many hands made light work of the fish, and when done, Tom put them on the stove he had built during the day.

This article, indispensable for culinary purposes, was made of square stones, and was quite a promising contrivance.

There was also an oven in which we could bake should an occasion demand it. When the fish were done, we put half of them away for breakfast. Ned and Joe made a dash at what remained in the pan, and with mouths crammed full, managed to inform us of the fact that the fish were splendid.

Without waiting to hear any more, we attacked them with a vigor that made them vanish wonderfully fast.

In taste and looks they resembled our white fish from the lakes. When nothing remained but a heap of bones, we found that our appetites were not yet satiated.

We thought of the share reserved for breakfast, but Tom demurred at this, and saying he would get something to fill us up, darted into the cave.

Of course we thought this something must be a ham; and the reader can judge of our astonishment when my cousin calmly laid a large loaf of bread on the table.

Yes, the boy had actually been baking in his new oven, and although he had no yeast to make it rise, still this object had been accomplished by another method, somewhat similar to the salt-rising one of the present day.

Ned and Joe could hardly put a curb on their impatience. Tom being an officer, and myself a favored individual, we had often had fresh bread during the voyage of our respective crafts, for captains, as a general thing, fare sumptuously, storing away amounts of canned things in their cabins for the trip.

Had Tom allowed the bread more time to rise, it would have been much better; and this was always done afterwards, but on the first memorable occasion he had been in too great a hurry, so that the job might be done before I put in an appearance.

Now, that my attention was called to the subject, I remember how anxiously Tom called me away from the vicinity of the house at noon when he saw me snuffing around, for the bread had only come out of the oven, and the air was impregnated with its delightful aroma.

We all managed to do full justice to Tom's attempt, and, when supper was at length over, all united in declaring it good, even our modest cook himself joining in.

After the meal we went out and explained the working of the traps to the boys, and loaded the heavy musket, putting in two bullets in order to make sure work of it.

After sauntering around for awhile, we returned to the hut, for the shades of night were beginning to cast their black arms over the face of nature, and the air was really chilly despite the warmth of the day.

Our fire inside the hut felt very comfortable, we seated ourselves around it, Tom and I preparing to listen while the others related what adventures had befallen them during the day.

They had been quite a time in reaching the summit of the hill, for their guns and the imple-

ments brought along for work were rather heavy, and there were several cliffs which of necessity had to be rounded, as scaling them was out of the question.

When about three-fourths of the way up they came to the last tree, and set about cutting it down with the ax brought for that purpose. It was a little more than a sapling, but, being tall and straight, had caught Tom's eye when we were up there, and he had mentioned it to the others as the very thing they needed.

Once on the ground it was easy work to lop off the branches, and then the sad-looking remnant, in the shape of a pole, was pulled to the top of the hill, with many rests between time, it being green wood and weighty.

The long strip of red bunting was next nailed to the thin end; a hole dug by the boys on the highest point of land our possessions could boast of, and after this the signal-pole was planted firmly, so that the wind would not tear it down.

As it was now nearly noon, they proceeded to eat what dinner they had brought, but as this had been put up after breakfast, and when they were not hungry, they found but a scanty supply.

After demolishing what there was, and thus taking the edge from their appetites, they started for the cave, in front of which they had the day before, with Tom's assistance, constructed a trap.

This cave was on the western side of the hill, and about half way down.

Upon nearing it the boys broke into a run, such was their eagerness.

A black-looking hole at one end where the sticks had broken, though not of huge dimensions, was quite sufficient to tell the tale; the trap was sprung. Giving a shout as they realized this important fact, the boys hastened even more rapidly, and were soon peering down the opening.

At first nothing but darkness met their gaze; but when their eyes had in some degree become accustomed to it, they made out three tiny, shrinking forms.

Whether goats or not, it was impossible for them to tell just then, and it was only when all of the sticks had been cleared away, that they were able to tell that their captives were two kids and a fine-looking nannie goat.

The next question on their repertoire now presented itself, and proved quite a staggerer. How were they to get the goats out?

After mature deliberation, Joe proposed to go down and fasten the rope they had used to haul up the tree for a signal-pole, around the old goat.

To this, Ned, who had had some experience with goats before, readily assented, and accordingly let his comrade down into the pit.

When within a few feet of the bottom, the old mother, who had stood all the while looking at the two boys, made a rush at Joe's legs, and came within a few inches of his pedal extremities as he lifted them up.

This was something he had not counted on, and Joe came up, hand over hand, in a far less period of time than it had taken him to go down. And during the performance, Ned was laughing so hard, that he came very near letting go of the rope, and dropping both it and his companion.

It was only when Joe called out that he was falling, that Cassius came to the rescue and saved Caesar.

When this event had transpired, and that worthy had regained solid ground, the two sat down to recover their breath, and decide upon some plan, whereby the captive might be gotten out of the pit.

After a long confab in which many ingenious though utterly impossible ways and means were discussed, the simple process of lassoing Mrs. Nannie presented itself, and delighted with the idea the two began to angle for her with a noose at the end of a rope.

Simple though the theory seemed the practice of it proved more troublesome, and nearly an hour was spent in their efforts.

At the end of that time a grand *coup de grace* was made, and the sly old goat hauled up.

It took the two of them to hold her, and now a new difficulty presented itself in regard to means they should employ in order to get the young ones out.

The rope was only long enough to reach the bottom of the pit, and this could not be used, so the boys found themselves in a scrape something similar to the man who had a fox, a goose and some corn, and who could take but one across the river at a time.

There was danger of the fox eating the goose or the latter the corn if left alone.

True the goose might have been ferried over first, but which could he bring next? He ar-

ranged matters to his satisfaction by taking Mrs. Goose first, then Mr. Fox, and carrying back the fowl: then ferrying the corn over, and leaving it with Reynard, and last of all taking the goose again.

So our young friends compromised matters by taking their stout handkerchiefs, and tying the old goat's legs until the young ones were secured.

These latter were left loose, for the boys felt sure the affectionate little kids would not stray far from their mother, and in this they were correct.

Making as much dispatch as possible, they covered the pit again with poles, and hiding these so dexterously with dirt, that even suspicious eyes would have trouble in discovering the little fraud.

The rope was now secured to the old goat, and untying her legs, the boys began descending the hill.

The rope was to be used in case the old goat broke loose, a thing which seemed probable even at the start, judging from the manner in which she struggled.

It proved a wise precaution, for several times on the way down she escaped their grasp, and but for the further detention offered her, would have assuredly escaped.

After all, however, victory perched upon their standard, and the captives were housed in safety.

When their story was concluded, I was obliged to relate my adventures, and when speaking of the shark, I saw Ned start and shiver; but he said nothing to explain his conduct, and thinking he had merely been the recipient of a chill, I soon forgot the matter.

At length we grew tired, and seeking our various couches, wooed the gentle goddess of sweet slumber.

How long we slept, I do not know, but it must have been in the vicinity of midnight when a terrific discharge, resembling thunder, brought the whole of us to our feet in alarm.

Darkness surrounded us on all sides, and I could hear Ned or Joe scratching matches in the corner, and vainly endeavoring to strike a light.

"The trap!" ejaculated Tom, just as I was about to believe it must be a cannon from a vessel in our harbor.

At the same moment Joe succeeded in igniting the candle in a lantern.

Then he led off, with Tom just behind, bearing a rifle, myself behind with an ax, and Ned bringing up the rear and carrying our carving knife, that being the only weapon within his reach.

This solemn procession marched out into the night, and headed for Pig's Palace.

As we neared this delightful abode, we could hear a great grunting and squealing from within; and it was evident that the swine were badly frightened by the loud detonation of our deep-mouthed and heavily-loaded musket.

The log trap was still set, and we did not give it a second look after ascertaining this fact.

When we reached the other trap, we found a lot of the stones knocked down, and this calamity was doubtless caused by the animal that had been the maker of this alarm.

Upon looking over the stone wall, we saw, with the valuable aid of Joe's lantern, the body of a bear.

It was quite dead; and as we desired to examine it more closely, we hauled it out of the narrow passage.

The predominating color was a smooth, shining black, while his throat and breast were a dirty white, and around its nose we discovered a little buff.

At a glance any one could tell that it was a bear, for it had the unmistakable look of Bruin; but as to its species, I could not even hazard a guess, nor could Ned or Joe.

I afterward learned by referring to my book, that there is only one kind of bear in Chili and Brazil. Tom had, however, been closely examining it, and all at once he uttered an exclamation of satisfaction that told of some discovery.

"I thought so," said he, at length, "though I've never had a close look at one of them before. It's easily recognized. Do you see these two half circles of buff extending from the muzzle and arching over each eye? Naturalists liken them to a pair of spectacles, and for want of a better name, have called this a spectacle bear. I suppose the one we saw the other day was the very fellow, or its mate, Jack."

"Well, it's our meat, now," I added, at which faint attempt for a pun, a general smile went around. What was to be done with our capture? We might drag it into the cabin, and leave it there until morning; but Ned suggested a better way in the shape of a rope.

Fastening a strong one to Bruin's hind quarters, we pulled him under a tree, threw the rope

over a limb, and then, to use that expressive word, "yanked" him up.

It was not a large bear at all, though fat enough, and we found but little trouble in raising the animal several feet from the ground, where it was left until morning, when we could take more time, and secure both hide and meat.

Having finished this job, we unfastened the musket and charged it with balls again, so as to be ready in case there were more lovers of pork around. Then, after having rebuilt that part of the stone wall which had been prostrated, as well as the circumstances would allow we returned once more to our broken slumber.

We were not awoken again during the night, and when I at length arose in obedience to a severe punch from Ned, I found that daylight was rapidly coming on.

While Joe got breakfast ready, the rest of us went out to take a look around.

The glorious sun was about to rise, and the eastern horizon, as far as we could see, was a mass of gold.

This became intensified and brought to a center as the king of day drew nearer, and at last the friend of man wheeled about the line, as we could see by the light cast upon the waters.

We paid a visit to the goat-pen, and I boldly went into the inclosure to open the door of the cave.

No sooner had this been done, than old Nan came out with a rush, and immediately made a dash for me.

It was only after five minutes' maneuvering that I managed to reach the gate and place it between the infuriated pursuer and myself.

All of this time the two boys were laughing heartily over the matter, and seeing that it was best to put a good face on the affair, although feeling rather chagrined at my escapade, I joined in the merriment, and laughed heartily as any one.

Gathering some sweet grass, we threw it over the wall, and then walked off in the direction of our pig-sty.

The duties of the early morning were rendered complete by letting both the pigs and chickens out into their respective yards, and then we sauntered in the direction of the cabin.

Finding that Joe had prepared a very good meal we sat to, and did ample justice to it as was proved by the small quantity that remained after our assault was over and the castle stormed.

Ned announced that it was his turn to remain at home, and so the rest of us set about planning our work for the day.

There were several things we had been expecting to do, and as Tom wished to find out whether there was any fish in the lake, and our course would take us past this place, we made sure of a line and hooks.

We also intended bringing home any goats that might be found in the pit, which had already netted us three animals.

The lake being our first destination, we proceeded to follow up the stream, and in five minutes were beside the small, but beautiful sheet of water that graced our island, and which we had properly called Castaway Lake.

For the most part the shores were covered with trees, although here and there an open space was to be seen.

In some places the shore was a steep bank, several yards high, and in the face of this we could see a great many holes.

These holes were, as we knew, made by animals, for when we came in sight there were several dozen of the burrowers in plain view.

At the sound of footsteps, they made haste to disappear, but we managed to shoot one, which was leisurely examined.

I had read a good deal about this small but curious animal, and for once was enabled to give information even to Tom.

It was the coypu, found in Chili and several other parts of South America.

I can only describe it as I saw the animal.

The head was rather large, and the eyes placed high; a muzzle which I should call obtuse, and small round ears.

It had a long tail, almost destitute of hair, and, in my mind, resembling the scaly one of an opossum.

The fore feet had each five toes, all of which were free, while the outermost only of the hind feet were free, the rest being webbed like those of a duck.

There appeared to be two kinds of hair on the body, an undergarment of fine, close, fur, almost waterproof, and an upper strata as I called it of long straight brown hair, which is the prevailing color of the animal.

We noticed that the limbs were short, but very strong, so the movements of this animal on land are slow and crawling.

This animal remained unknown to the scientific

world, while thousands of skins, under the name of Racoonda, had been annually exported for the sake of fine under fur, which, like that of the beaver, was extensively used in the manufacture of hats.

They do not always inhabit fresh water, but sometimes live in the bays and channels which extend between the innumerable small islands of the Chonos Archipelago, neither do they live altogether upon vegetable matter, but often eat small fish, when these latter delicacy can be had.

It is a fierce little creature, and will fight bravely with the dogs employed in chasing it from the burrow, and catching it.

None of us felt inclined to eat our coypu, although the meat was white, and I had read that it was often used for food.

Upon measuring it, we found that the animal was twenty-one inches in length, without counting the tail, which was over a foot long.

It is said that in captivity, the coypu becomes attached and gentle, and is evidently well pleased with marks of attention from those with whom it has become familiar.

An extensive trade in their skins is carried on in Buenos Ayres, where they are improperly called "otters."

We wanted to save the beautiful skin of the defunct animal, and so, while Tom and myself prepared to throw in the fishing-line, Joe grasped his knife and set to work, using the blade as gingerly as possible for fear of spoiling his job.

Twenty minutes served to show us that there were a great many fish in the lake, although how they managed to get there is a mystery we never did, and probably never will fathom; the only explanation being that a terrific storm had thrown them there many years before.

Tom had left me, and I was about to pull the line in, when I felt a bite, and wishing to get the fellow before leaving, I waited a moment longer.

Then came a sudden, demoralizing jerk.

"Tom, Tom, I've caught a whale," I exclaimed, striving in vain to gain ground.

Whatever was on the other end, it proved stronger than I, for foot by foot I went toward the water.

Leaning backwards, I exerted all my strength, but it was of no avail, and had no one been with me I should most certainly have been compelled to let the line go (a thing I should have lamented exceedingly,) or else consent to a ducking, and lose it in the bargain.

Luckily the line was a stout one, or else it would have given way before this time.

Tom and Joe were moving away, leaving me to wind up the line, but my shouts soon brought them to the rescue.

It was time, too, for I was already at the edge of the shore, which at this point was sandy, and sloped down to the water.

They seized hold of the line, and my progress was stopped.

Then Tom cried, "Yo, heave oh!" and with our united strength the line went back a foot or more.

Fortunately the trees were close at hand, and after a dozen hearty pulls we reached the nearest, and passed the line around it.

Then, returning once more to the water, we again grasped the line, and repeated the operation with an equal amount of success.

In five minutes we had drawn out of the water, not a fish, as I had at first supposed my captive to be, but a large tortoise.

Tom had declared, as soon as he laid hands on the line, that it was not a fish, for the strain was steady, and not flighty.

After pulling the tortoise up on dry land, we saw why it required such an amount of strength to draw it out.

When caught, the turtle, as I called it, erroneously, I grant, had literally walked away with me, and after Tom and Joe lent their assistance, it had resisted our joint efforts as asturdily as possible by holding back, and grasping every object with its flippers.

The name of this singular object was matamata. There were several strange appendages about the head, like elongations of this part, which rendered it a very remarkable creature.

The head was flat and the eyes small. It had extraordinarily strong limbs, and a short tail.

I afterwards saw that the mouth was very wide, and the snout flexible, forming what might be called a double tube. Along the back of the neck were two rows of fringes; two membranes of the same character hung from the chin, and four others were placed across the neck.

This singular and, I may add, horrible looking tortoise is a native of South America, and, when fully grown is about three feet long. It is now very scarce, even in Cayenne, where it used to be very plentiful, for its flesh is held in high estimation as food, and it is persistently hunted by those who have once tasted it.

It is carnivorous, inhabiting lakes and rivers.

where, with its proboscis above the surface, it conceals itself amidst floating aquatic herbage, awaiting the approach of water fowl, fishes, *et cetera*, which are quickly seized when within reach.

It swims rapidly and darts with great velocity upon its prey.

The one which we had captured was almost fully grown, and Tom, who had once tasted soup made from the matamata, was greatly overjoyed at the prospect of indulging in the luxury again.

As for Joe and myself we didn't like the looks of this fringed and fluted tortoise, and almost laughed when Tom declared that the Cayennites believe it to be the finest dish in the world.

At first we were at a loss as to what ought to be done with the tortoise; but when I proposed the same plan that had been carried out so successfully with the bear, there was a unanimous approval. But how were we to kill the thing? It is all very well to say "Cut its throat;" but this was not such an easy thing to do, for the rascal as soon as it found itself on land, drew in both claws and head. For some time we tried to draw its head out, in order to accomplish this humane purpose, but without success.

We pulled mightily upon the line; but, as our efforts were fruitless, we at length concluded that the hook was only caught in a protuberance of the shell. In this emergency Tom came to the rescue. A fish was held before the head and when the greedy tortoise shot out its head, my cousin dexterously cut its throat, and we hung it from the limb of a tree.

Here we left our capture, intending, if possible, to take it with us on our way home.

An hour was passed in climbing the hill, and at the end of that time we neared the goat-trap. As we drew closer, we found the mock surface again broken, and from this we felt sure that the pit was not empty at any rate. Upon looking in we saw a nannie, the exact image of our other one, and a kid pretty well grown.

Turning to Joe, Tom laughingly asked him if he would suffer us to lower him down on a rope, so that the old one might be caught; but that worthy demurred.

"Shiver my timbers if I do," said he; "I had just about enough of that yesterday. You fellows don't know how savage one of these mother goats can be."

I thought I ought to know after being chased around our pen in the morning, but, not desiring to raise another laugh at my expense, I did not say so. We concluded to adopt the same plan the boys had put in operation the previous day, and, forming a lasso from the rope, began angling.

Tom and I were unsuccessful; but Joe, more experienced, soon managed to lasso Mrs. Nannie No. 2. Pulling her up, we tied her legs with pieces of stout twine, which Joe had been careful enough to bring along, remembering the sad fix he and Ned had been in the preceding day.

Now that the furious one of the couple was made safe, that gallant youth avowed his intention of going down to have a wrestle with the half grown kid, and nothing loath, we lowered him on the rope.

It proved a tough job for Joseph, riding him completely around the pit three times; butting him up against the side, and demoralizing him generally; so that when the goat was evidently secured, our valiant comrade looked as though he had been indulging in a free fight; and when he came to the surface, he solemnly declared that he had entered the pit for the last time.

The trap was again set, and made ready for a victim.

When this was done, we sat down and ate a little lunch we had brought with us, and which now proved very acceptable.

Above us was the signal-pole in plain sight, with the strip of red bunting floating gayly in the breeze.

Ascending to the summit of the hill, we took a wide survey, but could see no sail.

It might be weeks and even months, before a ship came close enough to see our signal, and even then take no notice of it.

Sitting on the top of the hill by the pole, we had a half hour talk about our situation and prospects, and then, having cooled off we descended to where our captives lay.

Tom and Joe took the mother between them, and I followed in the rear with the other one, which I am bound to confess, proved himself a sturdy fellow.

It was harder work than I had expected, holding on to that half-grown monster, and I wished every now and then that Ned was there to lend his valuable aid.

The little fiend would pull me over to one side, and then almost trip me up by a sudden dash towards the opposite.

Then he would hold stubbornly back, and even

while I pulled, make a sudden dash forward that rendered life a burden to me.

Misery likes company, they say, and I certainly know half of my troubles seemed to vanish when I saw the others going through the same performance.

Ned was waiting for us, holding the gate open, and with a smile on his face.

We formed a double row, and then took the ropes from our late captives, who took a couple of springs forward; the gate was closed and they were housed.

CHAPTER IX.

JERKED BEAR'S MEAT—OUR SECOND EXPLORATION—THE CHILIAN WOODPECKER—CRESTED GUANS—BREAK BONES—SCISSORS BILL—BEAUTIFUL SWANS—SETTING NIGHT LINES—TWO NOVEL OVENS.

It was somewhere in the neighborhood of three o'clock, and after telling Ned about the tortoise, the whole of us went to bring it from the lake shore. It was no easy work, dragging shell and all down to our habitation, but sheer strength managed it, and upon reaching our destination, we immediately set to work as there were many things to do before darkness came on.

Ned had taken off the bear's skin, and cut up the carcass according to the best of his ability, following out the general directions left by Tom. The latter named individual showed Joe and myself how to jerk the bear's meat, and then he gave his assistance to Ned, who was puzzling over the knotty problem, as to how the shell should be taken from the back of the tortoise. Between the two of them they managed the task, and shortly after, part of our capture was boiling in a large pot over a fire that seemed hot enough to melt even iron. The reader must not wonder if at times I call the matamata a turtle, for, indeed, it went by that name among us. Up to this time I had imagined that a tortoise was a land animal, while the turtle lived for the most part in water; and yet here we found one of the former class, making a home of our lake.

When the bear's meat was fixed to the frames prepared for that purpose, it was almost night, and so we hastened to store both articles away in the cave, as it was very probable that our supply of meat to dry would be rather limited if left out until morning.

After shutting up our domestic animals and fowls, we arranged the two traps which had accomplished such execution the previous night.

We then adjourned to the cabin, and were soon discussing the relative qualities of bread, soup, and bearsteak. When supper was over we sat and talked. Tom had found a nice log-book on the privateer and kept a journal of our affairs, and to this manuscript I find myself indebted during the editing of this tale, as it gives full particulars where my memory would without it have been at fault.

With a warning from Joe in the shape of a tremendous yawn, that it was time we retired, the whole of us made haste to find our couches.

The next morning broke clear and cool. As it was Joe's turn at home, we left the various duties to his care and marched away.

On this occasion our route differed from the preceding trip, as we rounded the hill on the side away from the lake.

Our delight was great when we found that the trees were actually filled with birds. Several flocks of many-colored macaws amused me, as did also a dozen other species of the feathered tribes, among which Tom pointed out the Chilean woodpecker and the large-crested guan.

In one place we scared up a flock of dirty-looking vultures that appeared to have been feasting on the carcass of some defunct animal, although we did not venture close enough to discover what this latter was. I found the Chilean woodpecker different from my old red headed friends.

It was of a blackish hue, with bars of brown running along its back and wings.

In length it was about a foot from tip to tip, while those I was accustomed to seeing seldom exceeded eight inches.

The crested guan is really a native of Brazil, and rarely found elsewhere, but several pair were pointed out to me by Tom.

It was about the size of a common hen, only a little longer. The upper surface was a dusky, brownish black, as I would call it, with a gloss of olive green, and the head being surmounted by a crest. Its head and neck were very strange in appearance.

The throat fold of the skin was, I should declare, scarlet, the naked cheeks purple, and the breast regularly spotted with dashes of white on a dusk ground, which latter color prevailed on the under surface.

Two of these birds were feeding near by, and

as Tom declared them to be excellent eating, we shot them, and Joe shouldered the ill-fated fowls.

Before the double crack, the woods had fairly resounded with the songs and chatter of birds; but instantly the silence of death seemed to have fallen upon all nature, and it was several moments before the concert again burst forth.

Passing on through the woods, we turned to the left, and in twenty minutes could catch glimpses of the grand old ocean.

In front the beach sloped gently down to the water, while to the right were piles of rocks. As there was an opening in the reef beyond, the waves came rolling steadily in to the shore, and coming in contact with the ragged boulders, they were lashed into foam, the spray flying high in the air. Perched in rows at this point were thousands of birds, and as many more were cleaving the air or sailing through the water.

Among them I readily distinguished the two species of penguins, resembling soldiers on duty.

There were also two kinds of petrels in sight, the great black fellow and the cape pigeon.

The former has, I believe, gained the name of *Break Bones* from its savage disposition.

I found that there was a stranger among these many winged inhabitants of the air, and that it was stranger than any of them.

It was the *Scissors Bill*, which is also known as the *Sea-Skinmer* and the *Cut-Water*.

This extraordinary bird is about twenty inches in length.

Its stretch of wing is immense, giving a measurement, by calculation, of three feet and a half. Everlastingly traversing the surface of the water, it flies with the celerity of an arrow.

It is, so far as I could judge, of a white and dark brown color.

Suddenly Ned uttered an exclamation, and pointed to something that had attracted his attention.

Upon looking in the direction his attention was turned toward, we saw a couple of beautiful swans sailing majestically about, where the water was smooth, picking now and then at some adventurous bird that had come too close.

They were beautiful birds, both in their plumage and movements.

The heads and necks were jet black, and everywhere else nothing marred their snowy whiteness; they were about the size of the hoopoe, and had red bills.

Tom was seized with a desire to obtain one of these lovely swans to preserve as a specimen of natural history, and we resolved to make the attempt.

Tom fired his gun; one of the swans arose but the other lay upon the surface of the water beating out its life.

Ned and I both fired at the escaping one, and were lucky enough to bring it to the ground with a broken wing.

By wading into the water my cousin laid hands upon his trophy, but we had hard work in capturing the wounded fellow.

Leaving the beach, we proceeded up the hill, aiming for the trap.

As we were well laden already, we did not feel very sorry to find that the goats had been wise enough to keep away for one night.

The wounded swan bit at me furiously, and when my hands showed several red marks, I nipped his revenge in the bud by a judicious use of my handkerchief for a gag.

Reaching home a little after noon, we found Joe munching his noon repast, and after binding up the broken wing of our captive, we put the swan in the chicken-yard.

During the remainder of the day it sat moping, eating nothing.

In the evening it followed the fowls into the house, and in the morning proudly condescended to eat with them.

The bear's meat was rapidly drying in the sun, and by night would be ready to put away for future use.

Dinner over, Ned, Joe and myself began sorting over our stores, so that we could always lay hands on the proper articles.

Upon finishing our work, we went up to the lake, and set several night lines, to be pulled up in the morning.

Tom had for a couple of hours been engaged in stuffing the dead swan, and made quite a fine job of it, there being a set of taxidermist's tools among the articles secured from the ill-fated privateer.

The bird was set in a prominent position, and we praised Tom's handiwork so much that he ventured upon other specimens, and soon had the basis of quite a collection of the feathered tribes.

Taking in the meat, and also the bear's skin that had been drying in the sun all day, we proceeded to eat a light supper, after finishing

which, Tom showed us a novel way to cook the guans.

Digging two holes in the ground, he started a fire in each.

Ned and I fixed the birds, stuffing them with bread and some pieces of wild onion, discovered by our chief.

After awhile we cleaned the fires out of the holes, placed clean pieces of bark on the bottoms, which were terribly hot, and laid the guans thereon, covering them with leaves, and the holes with boards, so as to keep the heat in.

Tom gave it as his opinion that we could trap the coypus with the steel traps found on the "Pluto;" so hunting them out, we laid them by, ready for service. Most caves you will find are damp, but ours must have been an exception, for it was perfectly dry; so much so, that even our powder suffered no harm.

No sooner had we jumped to our feet in the morning, than we thought of our ovens, and ran out to them. Upon opening one, the delicious odor almost crazed us, and as both fowls vanished at breakfast, I may say that I never tasted anything better than the roasted guan.

I was left at home while the others went off to the lake. Before noon they came back with half a dozen fine fish, having also set the two steel traps.

Once more they set out, heading this time for the bear trap.

Just before sunset they appeared, each one carrying a goat upon his back. All were old ones, two females and a buck, and despairing of leading them, they had resorted to this novel though wearisome method.

Chasing all of the goats into the cave, we shut the door on them, and barred it.

In all, we could count eight, three of them kids, and resolute Tom announced it as his determination to make the attempt on the following day, in order to find out whether we could have milk for our coffee, of which beverage we drank sparingly on account of this want.

After supper all but Tom lay down to court the gentle god of slumber.

He only lingered to jot down the events of the day in his log, and upon finishing the record, threw himself upon his couch, and followed the rest of us into the fabled land of dreams.

CHAPTER X.

ALONE IN THE WOODS—TRACKING A BEAR—THE TRAILER TRAILED—A STATE OF SIEGE—AMONG THE TREETOPS—A SURPRISE PARTY—THE SPIT DEVILS—QUEER FISHING—RUMINATIONS—ON THE BEACH—I BECOME A TERRIBLE DEMON.

EARLY the following morning, Ned and Joe started off to look after the traps and the night lines.

It being Tom's turn at home, I took my gun and started along the same route we had used before.

When I reached the place where we had turned to the right, I kept on into the heart of the woods.

Ten minutes later I concluded that I had about reached the center of the forest.

From where I stood the top of the hill was plainly visible, and I could see the signal-flag flaunting in the breeze.

The pole being firmly planted, we had no fears of its giving way should a wind storm descend upon it.

I intended making a thorough trip of it, desirous of having something new to communicate to the boys when I returned.

Little did I dream of the adventure that I was destined to pass through.

I had gone about two-thirds of the way to the southern end, when I came upon a little spring that found its way to the air through a small opening.

Right glad was I to welcome this fresh water, and laing down I proceeded to quench my thirst.

Just as I had finished, I became aware of the fact that plainly imbedded in the muddy bank of the stream were the footprints of a bear.

It was not this alone that startled me, but when my eyes first fell upon them, the water was still trickling in, and showed signs of being muddy.

This proved that the animal had been there but a few minutes before, and had doubtless been scared away by the noise I had made.

Obeying an irresistible impulse I set out on the trail.

The tracks were plain enough, and I found it an easy job to follow.

At first he had gone off on a shambling trot, but upon getting beyond hearing, his pace had moderated to a walk.

This much I discovered by the trail, which was broadly formed in the earth.

Although I was not an expert in this line, I can say that, considering the difficulties attendant upon such an undertaking, I made out very well indeed.

As to my object in following the bear, it was partly a desire for fun, and a hope of ridding the island of a pest, for so long as these animals lived, our domestics would never be safe.

Soon the forest became very dense, and it was with difficulty that the sun shot a few golden bars down through the thick foliage.

Several times I saw groups of little animals with fine fur and ears almost round; but upon my approach they would vanish in some cavity.

I afterwards learned that it was the celebrated chinchilla.

Its fur is used in the same manner as the coypu, and, as they live in the valleys of the Andes, where the winters are very severe, they have need of their thick coats.

Their food, I believe, consists principally of wild onions which they like exceedingly well, and of which there were plenty on the island.

I knew that I was gradually closing in upon the bear, and became a little cautious.

A small glade in which the grass grew wild, fell in my course, and passing over this, I again entered the woods.

Hardly had I taken ten paces beyond the limits of this glade, however, than I heard a low growl, and discovered Mr. Bruin squatted just in front of me.

Up went my rifle, which luckily enough I had carried in place of my fowling-piece, and after a brief aim, the trigger was pulled.

Perhaps it was the gloom of the woods, or else an intervening twig turned my bullet from its course; at any rate, I only wounded the bear, and the roar of pain he gave vent to, made me see the matter in another light altogether.

Ten seconds later, and, most wonderful to behold, the tables had changed, the pursuer was flying recklessly through the forest with the late pursued at his heels.

I made good time in reaching the glade, and here the long grass somewhat retarded the movements of my clumsy adversary, who, while among the trees, had bowled along even faster than myself.

I think I gained on bruin during our passage through the glade; but will not argue the point, as it makes no material difference.

What I should do when the trees were gained, had not as yet entered my head, nor had I time to discuss the matter, for I suddenly became aware of the fact that a second bear had come into the glade.

This one's nose was close to the ground, and as it passed along the route I had taken before, it looked suspiciously like the trailer was being trailed.

My case now looked desperate, and when this second bear joined in the chase, I became alarmed for my safety.

As the only course left open for me, I made an abrupt turn to the left, thus keeping both of my foes in the rear.

With every nerve and muscle strained, I bounded along, and in half a moment was once more under the trees.

Obeying an impulse that it would puzzle me to define, I dropped my rifle, and seizing the lower branches of a tree, pulled myself up among them.

My belt caught on a projecting branch, and in the struggle fell to the ground.

Hardly had I gained the first perch some six feet from the ground, than my enemies arrived at the spot, and the unwounded one began to climb the tree in such a dexterous manner, that I confessed mentally to be his inferior in the art.

Then the question presented itself, how could I keep the savage monster down?

My weapons were all gone with the exception of my knife, and drawing this latter, I leaned over and waited for Mrs. Bruin, as I took the second bear to be.

A sharp cut from the keen blade sent her rolling to the ground, but with indomitable will she made two more attempts before giving it up as a bad job.

After snuffing and pawing at my firearms for a few moments, the two calmly laid down and began their protracted siege.

Whenever I made a movement, they would watch me carefully and growl out a warning, which, however, I cared but little for.

Thus an hour passed away; the sun sailed higher in the heavens; noon came and went, finding me in the same predicament.

With my lunch and canteen of water, I satisfied both my hunger and thirst, and then as time passed on, fell to ruminating.

How would this little affair end? Would the bears remain there all the afternoon? I had not any serious fears, for I knew the boys would hunt for me in the night or morning, should I

fail to put in an appearance; and being the owner of strong lungs, it would be easy to direct them to the spot.

The only thing I didn't fancy, was the humiliation of having to sleep on those hard branches, and be found in such a scrape by my comrades.

Having cogitated over the matter, I determined to make an attempt at escape.

How was this to be accomplished? For some time I looked around, and then an idea which I considered very brilliant struck me.

The trees as has been said before grew very close together, and often the limbs would be interlocked. By making use of my agility, I might pass from one to another. Climbing up as far as I dare go, I climbed into the next tree, and deeming myself hidden from the bears by the dense foliage underneath, I did not look down at all for fear of growing dizzy, as I was far above the ground.

The next trial was rather difficult, as I had to hang from one limb and catch on another with my legs, which was dangerous practice at such a height; but I managed to accomplish it in safety. After this the task of passing from tree to tree was easy enough, as the branches seemed arranged especially for such an undertaking.

Perhaps half an hour or more was consumed in this air travel, and at length concluding that I had gone far enough from the original tree, I determined to descend.

Chuckling over the success of my plan, I dropped from limb to limb, and at length passed through the lower screen of foliage.

What I saw on the ground came near making me lose my hold, so great was my astonishment and chagrin, for there, seated on their haunches and calmly awaiting my descent were the two identical bears whom I had left, as I confidently believed, guarding my rifle and revolvers.

To say that I was surprised would be expressing it feebly, for I was literally thunderstruck at the sight.

What was worse, the scoundrels appeared to be hugely tickled over the joke, if one could judge from the manner in which they rubbed their noses and seemed to wipe their spectacles.

And shortly the full force of the thing struck me, and as I saw myself crawling among the treetops, fondly imagining that every yard took me further away from my foes, while the shrewd rascals were watching me all the while, I laughed until the tears ran down my cheeks in spite of my desperate situation.

I was about as badly off as before, and vainly I conjured up footings for various plans which could never be carried out.

After awhile, my hand, in seeking for some weapon, fell upon my powder-horn, and this instituted a train of thoughts which ended in plan number two.

Pouring a handful on a smooth piece of bark, I wet it and began making what boys generally call a spit devil.

As every one of my readers knows what that is, I will not explain the simple "modus operandi," but only say that in a short time I had four balls of hard powder ready for use.

Applying a match to one of these, I dextrously dropped it on the back of the female bear.

It caught in the long hair and remained, sending out a cloud of fiery red sparks.

Rapidly lighting a second, I managed to place it on Mr. Bruin, and then eagerly awaited results.

Both of them seemed uneasy at first, but when the warmth grew uncomfortable, the bears, much to my amazement, instead of bolting madly away amid a cloud of fire and smoke, displayed a sagacity that made me believe was pitted against two fiends.

Acting as any sensible person would have done, they rolled over and actually smothered the fire.

Again I attempted the trick, and a second time was the fire extinguished, and that right speedily.

After that I gave it up.

The half hours slipped by, and I assumed as comfortable a position as could be found, but I felt very uneasy.

While rummaging my pockets to find out the slim prospects for supper, my hand fell upon the stick around which my old friend, the fish-line, was wrapped.

Idea number three presented itself.

Had I thought of it before making my journey among the treetops I might at that moment have been home.

I resolved, however, to make amends for the mistake, and travel back to the original tree, and as the hour was growing late, no time must be lost.

After taking my bearings I started, but in spite of the haste I made, it took me over an hour to fulfill the work, as I lost my way at one time, and had some trouble at the same point where I had risked so much before.

As if they had constituted themselves my guardians, the bears followed after me, and at length resumed their positions under the original tree.

Now began the most unique angling I ever participated in.

Lower the three hooks descended, the bears eying them suspiciously.

They did not move, however, but lay with their heads between their paws, winking their wicked-looking eyes, and, as Tom afterwards facetiously remarked when listening to the yarn, "rubbing their spectacles occasionally, in order to see the better."

One of my gentle friends lay with his fore paws upon the rifle, as if it regarded the weapon as dangerous, and I may as well remark that this was the fellow who had been wounded by the bullet.

I determined to show him that the revolvers, though smaller, were equally deadly.

The belt and its contents lay just where it had fallen, near the foot of the tree.

By some maneuvering I managed to catch a hook in the buckle, and hauled the precious revolvers upward.

Mr. Bruin left the rifle, and rising to his hind feet, made a lunge at the swinging belt, but I was too quick for him, and drew it out of reach.

Another moment, and the sharp crack sounded. My first enemy receiving the leaden missile, rolled over in the agonies of death, and the other came over to her lord and master, as if to discover what his comical actions meant.

This I explained in a tangible manner, although three bullets were necessary to dispose of her ladyship.

Feeling safe, I now descended, and after loading my weapons, prepared to go home.

Anxious for some trophies to prove my prowess, I cut out the bears' tongues, and then put my best foot forward.

I felt tired and sore to some extent, and wished myself with the boys.

The sun had long since gone to rest, and the moon was sailing along her track, but under the trees it was so dark that I determined to seek the beach.

This I soon reached, and while hastening along, occupied myself with looking at the beautiful moon-lit ocean, and thinking of our situation.

While in the gloomy forest, my thoughts had been of a like type, for darkness breeds melancholy; but upon the bright shore I soon became cheerful.

Our situation might be far worse.

We had a splendid island home, and even should a passing ship fail to put in an appearance, we could soon build a boat with our tools, gain the mainland, and sail upward to a Chilian port.

The privateer captain had said my boat was swept away in the storm, and I had no reason to doubt his word.

Portions of it had doubtless been cast upon the shore, and I would be mourned as drowned.

As regarded Tom and the others, their friends and relatives would not consider them really lost for many months, as the "Horn" detains vessels it may be weeks by the contrary gales.

So it was only my parents whom the iron rod of agony would smite.

As I drew near the mouth of the creek, I heard loud laughing and splashing, and remembering my adventure with the shark close by, I wondered how they could be reckless enough to go in swimming.

This was, without doubt, the nicest place on the whole beach, but they should not peril their lives.

As I drew nearer, I discovered to my satisfaction that wise Tom had thought of Mr. Shark, and that the boys were in no danger.

A low wall of stones ran out from the mouth of the creek, along a bar, and made a circuit, returning to the beach and inclosing quite a space.

During the afternoon the boys had made this by the aid of the log I had used in fishing.

The beach was sloping and sandy, and when the tide came in, the deepest part was about eight feet, while at low tide it was only a third of that.

Tom was certainly a professor at swimming, and was almost a merman in the water, doing all sorts of curious things.

From him I had learned the art, and felt flattered when my cousin declared I took to the water like a duck.

Neither Ned nor Joe could swim a stroke, and I found that Tom was teaching them.

It may seem strange that two sailors were ignorant of this art, but it is an honest fact that one-half our Jack Tars cannot ever keep themselves afloat.

It is curious that old mariners who have spent

their lives upon the briny deep, do not know how to swim, and yet it is not always the case.

The nearer you come to Mammoth Cave, or King's Mountain, the less the inhabitants know about those wonders.

It certainly ought to be one of the rules that a sailor should know how to swim, as well as to perform his various duties.

I resolved to give the boys a pleasant surprise, although it might be in a curious form, as mine had been when I saw the two bears waiting for me.

Passing among the trees, I reached a point near them, and then slipping out of my clothes, I tied my hair up in a bunch like a scalplock, and put several green leaves on it.

After this I covered myself from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet with black mud, discovered in a pool, and then seized upon a dead wood club.

The three boys were laughing heartily at something, when an ear-piercing yell came to them, and startled they gazed in the direction from whence it proceeded.

To their horror, they discovered what appeared to be a black savage whooping along the beach, and waving his mighty war-club aloft.

CHAPTER XI.

A BAD SCARE—TOM'S LOG-BOOK—MEMORIES OF TURTLE SOUP—THE LAKESHORE—A SURROUND—TRIP AROUND OUR ISLAND HOME—THE SOUTHERN END—PREPARING FOR THE BOAT—TOM GIVES A SHORT SEA YARN—A FIGHT WITH CHINESE PIRATES.

THIS black imp (I beg my own pardon) was dancing along the shore, shouting and waving his club, and of course they expected him to be the chief of a band that would soon make its appearance.

So stricken with surprise were the boys, that for a full moment they stood as motionless as stones.

Then the pretended savage dropped his club, ran along the newly erected wall, and plunged head foremost into the water close beside them.

The three scampered to the shore, and put for the adjacent forest like good fellows.

None of them dared deny afterwards that they were frightened.

Before reaching the trees, a shout from the water, well-known to them was heard, and turning, they saw not the black face of a villainous savage, but the well-known phiz of myself, Jack Merton; for in my dive I had pulled the string from my long hair, and rubbed the mud partially from my face.

Of course, they recognized me at once, but it took them full sixty seconds to realize the immensity of the joke, and they then retraced their steps looking a little sheepish.

Tom complimented me on my success, and owned himself scared, while Joe wanted to know how I could handle such a huge club so easily, which was made manifest by an examination of the dead wood.

They were anxious to learn where I had been, but I told them the story would keep, as I wanted a swim.

For half an hour we darted about, and then having had enough we proceeded to dress.

When we reached the cabin, I stowed away a quantity of edibles, and then quietly handed my trophies to Tom.

"Mr. Merton, please to pass your opinion on those articles!" Tom looked and laughed.

"Bears' tongues, as I'm a sailor, Jack. Where in the mischief did you get 'em? Is there a tree of this species growing anywhere around?" said he.

I tried to tell the story as plainly as I could, not being a victim to self-praise, and Tom put in many remarks that heightened its amusing character.

When at length the yarn was ended, we all laughed so heartily that it was difficult to speak on any other subject.

I found that the boys had not been doing much that day, having occupied half of it in fixing the swimming place.

There had been no goats in the trap, and the fish were secured at the lake for supper, together with the skins of two coypus for furs.

After conversing for some time I declared myself sleepy, and sought my hammock.

Tom sat writing for a long time, and I find upon examination that he wrote my yarn in his log-book word for word, as I gave it; being the owner of a memory that would have been a blessing to a newspaper reporter.

I went to sleep while he wrote, and woke up to find my companions at work and breakfast nearly ready.

After our morning ablutions and the meal were

over, Tom, Joe and myself went to make the round which had now become a daily work.

Bringing the fish and coypus from the lake, we left them with Ned, and started out again.

The greater part of this day was spent in, cutting up the two bears and transporting the meat and skins home.

We went to bed early, being tired, Tom deferring his writing until the next day, when he would be at home.

In the morning the three of us started out; for, by virtue of our agreement, it was Tom's turn to look after the settlement.

We found a solitary old buck in the goat-trap, and managed to lay hold of him by a plan of Ned's.

He proved so strong that it took all of our strength to hold him, and we dubbed him the *Patriarch* on account of his gray beard.

Our earlier captives evidently knew and revered the sage old fellow, who was doubtless one of the original ones left upon the island by some shipwreck.

Greatly to our surprise, and, need I say, delight, we found at supper-time that Tom had managed to milk two of the goats; and for the first time in many months, we enjoyed our coffee in a civilized way.

"Boys, remarked Tom, as we ate, "how do you feel on the subject of more turtle soup?"

We all confessed a tendency in that direction, for the memory of the soup haunted us, and Tom explained his plan.

This was about the season when turtles laid their eggs in the sand, leaving them for the sun to hatch out, and Tom thought that perhaps we might catch one or more by paying a moonlight visit to the lake.

Although the matamata is really a tortoise, yet it has some of the turtle's habits, and there was a chance of success before us.

The eggs of turtles are esteemed a great luxury by many people; and thousands of these water turtles come ashore on the coast of Cuba every night, and each deposit fifty or sixty eggs. One would be apt to think that their number during the year would multiply fearfully, but it is not so.

Enemies, in the shape of men and beasts, hunt for the eggs, and the young ones that do hatch out have destroyers in the alligators.

Tom had not studied the habits of this creature closely, and could not vouch for our finding any of them on the beach; but, willing to take the risk, we all started forth, only carrying weapons in our belts, and a hatchet that Tom picked up. On our way we cut us each a stout cudgel, four or five feet in length, having a purpose in view for it.

We struck the lake at a rocky place, and walked along under the trees until a sandy patch was reached. Here we discovered a single tortoise, and quite a good sized one, too. She was about the center of the sand, and busily engaged in laying her eggs.

Tom gave a few directions, and we made a complete surround, Joe and Ned being near the water above and below, and Tom with myself opposite to them.

As the four of us drew near from opposite directions, we found that the matamata was filling up the hole with sand, and if left alone, she would doubtless have come again on the next night and left some eggs there, for they never mistake the place.

Catching sight of us, the old lady began making for the woods with surprising celerity; but Tom and I shouted and waved our clubs, so she turned toward the water. Here valiant Ned and Joe interposed, and finding enemies on all sides, the matamata began to show fight.

We all made a grand rush, and after a tussle, succeeded in landing her on her back. To cut her throat after the most approved method, was but the work of a moment, and after marking the spot where the eggs were, we hurried along the shore, leaving our first victim lifeless on the sand.

For almost five minutes we walked on, and then, coming to another stretch of sand, we managed to lay hands on a second tortoise. This was sufficient for the time, and after cutting its throat and suspending it from a tree, we gathered the eggs, and proceeding to our first capture served it in the same manner.

In the morning Tom cooked some of the eggs found, and we united in declaring them absolutely splendid.

The day, I find by reference to the log-book, was spent in bringing the two land turtles, the fish found on the lines, the contents of the steel traps, and a young kid found in the pit to our home.

During the evening we made up a plan for the next day, determining to go completely around

our island home, and hunt out a tree suitable for a boat.

Ned and Joe announced that they would rather remain at home and do the chores; so early in the morning Tom and myself marched forth, armed with our usual weapons, and a lunch in our pockets to fight hunger.

The route we took led us past the scene of my memorable bear scrape, and as I pointed out the situations Tom laughed heartily.

Some ten minutes later the trees began to grow further apart, and the cheery sun managed to force an entrance at places.

Everywhere the birds seemed without number, and among them were many kinds of brilliant plumaged macaws.

Chinchillas were to be seen dashing into their holes in every direction; and at points the wild grape vines almost covered the trees; but as the fruit was not yet ripe we left it untouched.

We were now below the hill, and after passing through another woods, found ourselves at the southern end of the island.

The beach was sandy, and a break in the reefs beyond, seemed made on purpose for a splendid landing-place.

Penguins and other birds neglected this quiet place, preferring the western shore and the foamy surf.

After looking about us curiously, we began sauntering up this latter.

Our signal was plainly visible, and we knew that a vessel could not help seeing it in the day time, if it sighted the land at all.

The search for a tree to form a boat now began, for although we would have preferred finding one nearer the cabin, still it would do no harm to pick out several in case none could be selected further north.

Several were marked as we went along the western shore, and towards noon, feeling hungry after our sharp tramp, we proceeded to do our lunch justice, resuming the walk afterwards.

As we drew near the lake we determined to visit our lines and traps, if the boys had not been there before us.

Just before leaving the beach we found the very tree we were looking for, and what was better, it already laid upon the ground.

We were glad it was near the beach, remembering poor Robinson Crusoe's mishap with the first boat he built.

Having marked the place where the log lay, and shot some wild ducks, we went to the lake, but found the boys had been before, and had reset the coypu traps and the night lines.

Ned and Joe were surprised to see us home so early, and immediately made us tell all we had seen, after which we resolved to bring our tools over to the log, so as to be ready for work early in the morning.

Among these articles were chisels, adzes, hatchets, saws and axes, and formed quite a load.

After leaving the tools in a dry spot we visited the goat-trap, finding two victims therein.

We replaced the thin sticks with strong ones, not wanting any goats for awhile, as we expected to be too busy for any visits to the trap, and should any fall in they would starve.

Leaving the goats tied we went further up and stood by our signal-pole.

The sun was near the horizon when we started for the cabin with our captives, and darkness was coming on as we cooked our evening meal.

Around the supper-table, (i. e. a seaman's chest), we were wont to tell stories.

Ned related one he had heard of—adventure in the Polar regions, and as Tom was called on he gave a short one, which I shall tell in his own words as far as possible:

"It is an adventure on the coast of China, and I came as near losing my life there as has ever happened.

"I was only a seaman then, a sort of an apprentice, and this was my second voyage.

"We were homeward bound from some port—I think it was Shanghai, when a dead calm caught us among a group of islands, and in sight of the shore.

"Our captain—brave old salt, that he was—declared himself alarmed; not at the want of wind, but that the calm should come upon us in those waters.

"You know, boys, China always has been a most diabolical place for pirates; they actually infest the coast, and woe to any unarmed ship that is so unlucky as to be becalmed near the shore or islands off the coast.

"It isn't by bravery that the Chinese devils do their work by any means, but by force of numbers.

"I have heard of them appearing over a thousand strong, and the brave Jack Tars are obliged to succumb, when no matter how many

they kill, others are always ready to take dead men's places.

"Our captain feared for the safety of his vessel, as we were but indifferently armed, and, as it afterward proved, his anxiety was not groundless.

About the middle of the afternoon several proas, loaded down with these 'water alligators' as one of the men termed them, put out from the islands and headed towards us.

"I might string this yarn out, but my eyes are heavy, boys, and I will be brief.

"They boarded us then, and the fight began, three hundred to thirty.

"Twice we cleared the deck of our assailants, but they kept on pouring over the bulwarks, savage looking men.

"I may say without flattery, that every one of us fought like heroes.

"I set my teeth and cut away with little compunction, for they seemed no better than wild beasts in the excitement of the time.

"In the end we should have come out victorious, as we proved too many guns for them, but to our horror we saw several more proas starting out from the islands.

"If they reached us we were lost. Anxiously I looked aloft and saw the sails quivering; the evening was bringing the breeze with it.

The joyful news was quickly communicated to the captain and my gallant fellow-seamen.

"A final rush was made by the entire crew, the crowd of yellow pirates was hustled overboard into the sea, and the proas cut loose from the ship.

"Slowly the vessel glided through the water, gaining power with every moment, and as darkness came on we had left the furious pursuers far in the rear, and were dashing merrily onward.

"The four men who had fallen, were shipped to their long home by sympathizing comrades, and with all ceremony; the dead pirates fed the sharks. And now to bed with you my hearties."

Ten minutes later the whole four of us were lost to the miseries of this world in slumber.

CHAPTER XII.

WORK ON THE NEW BOAT—A SEA SONG—"COME O'ER THE MOONLIT SEA, LOVE"—NED'S RECOLLECTIONS—THE SLIMY GREEN ROCK—I LISTEN TO STORY OF OUR ISLAND—PURSUED BY A SHARK—POOR DICK WRENSHAW'S FATE.

We were up with the first streak of dawn, and after breaking our fast, it was determined by vote that Ned should stay at home the first day, Joe the second, myself the third, and Tom the fourth, after which the list would commence again. In this way each one, after three days of hard work, would have one of comparative rest, which would be very agreeable.

Tom, as our leader, gave Ned a few extra directions, and then we started forth.

My cousin was the only one among us who had studied boat-making; he set us all at work, and pitched in like a beaver himself.

As our boat was to be a dug-out, he marked various lines upon it, and started Ned sawing while he and I wielded adzes and axes.

At noon we religiously observed an hour's rest, and proceeded to munch our dinner with an appetite whetted by hard labor.

Again we began to work and kept up until near sun-set, but Tom said he did not want this done until later, as the interior must be worked out.

It was three weary boys who sat down with Ned to the festive board that night, and this latter individual declared that boat-building must be a wonderfully appetizing thing.

On the following day he discovered how the affair worked himself.

Ned had a good tenor voice, and to beguile us as we ate, he sang a favorite sea song which I shall give as thoughtful Tom has recorded it in his note book.

"COME O'ER THE MOONLIT SEA."

Come o'er the moonlit sea, love,
For the waves are brightly glowing.
The winds have sunk to their evening rest,
And the tide is gently flowing.

The barque is in the bay, love,
And only waits for thee;
It's silken sails will throw, love,
Their radiance o'er the sea.

There is no sound save the echoed song
Of dark Italia's daughters,
Or the muffled splash of the boatman's oar,
As it dips in the sparkling waters.

Tho' bright the morn may dawn, love,
Along the smiling sea,
Far dearer still than morn, love,
Are moon lit waves to me.

I have a deep rooted suspicion that the song was of Ned's composition, and I find that Tom entertains a like idea in his records.

After finishing our supper we concluded to refresh ourselves with a swim, taking advantage of the bright moon of which the poet sang.

Tom and I plunged in, while the others, being novices, entered the water gradually.

For an hour we remained in the water. Ned and Joe were making great strides and gave promise of early success.

When the sport was over we felt decidedly refreshed. While dressing I noticed Ned gazing earnestly at the reefs, and at length he gave an exclamation of amazement. "Joe," said he in excited tones, pointing as he spoke, "look at that small square rock with the flat green top, near the reefs and just inside. Don't you remember it?"

"Can't say that I do," returned Joe, dubiously.

"Why man alive, have you forgotten poor Dick Wrenshaw and his fate?" exclaimed Ned.

"Of course not. Poor fellow, the sharks got him, but I was below at the time with the fever."

"A fact I forgot. And never forgot the particulars?" queried Ned.

"No, old Bob Stay refused to tell me, and he said I couldn't get a man on the ship to tell me, for they were all too horror-stricken," answered Joe.

"Neither could you at the time, but now I think I can go over it, though I'm a poor yarn-spinner and apt to fly off at a tangent.

"It was about three years ago—no, I am wrong, it could not have been much over two—Joe, Dick and myself were apprentices on the *Stormcloud*, and a mighty fine ship she was from keel to keelson; also the captain and mates.

"You all know, boys, what kind of captains we run across. I knew one, and let me tell you about him.

"One of the boys was down in his bunk, well nigh gone. All of us knew the nature of his disease, and that brandy would bring him up in a short time, while without it he must go under.

"We brought the captain to see him. He declared the lad would die, brandy or no brandy, and refused to give a drop, as it would be only wasting the liquor.

"Rendered desperate by the sight of our poor comrade, we resolved to steal a bottle from the captain's cabin.

"During the evening, when he and the mates were aft, looking after something, we drew lots, and it fell on me to do the work.

"I got in through the bulls-eye and came out the same way with a bottle of brandy, which we gave the sick boy a dose of.

"The effect was truly marvelous. The color began to come into his face, and he showed great signs of improvement.

"Suddenly the captain stood in our midst. He took in the whole situation at a glance, and with a string of curses that would have shamed a pirate, seized upon the bottle, and hurled it out of the port-hole into the sea, fiercely demanding who had stolen it.

"My comrades stood firm, and I was not detected. Not a drop of brandy could we get, and to be short, the poor lad died three days afterwards.

"So sure as there is a God in heaven, Captain Fairfax was Luke Burnet's murderer. When we gained port, the crew went in a body to the owners and told the story.

"They felt it a disgrace to employ such a man, and Fairfax received his walking papers. More than this, they had him tried, and he was sentenced for two years in the penitentiary; but on the way there, the desperate man escaped after killing one of his guards.

"He had a terrible spite against Joe, here, and myself, for we were the foremost of those who appeared against him. And now, having giving you a yarn that has nothing whatever to do with Dicky, I will return to my subject, the green rock."

We had finished dressing, and were walking along up the creek.

Sea stories had always possessed a fascinating influence for me, and I listened with absorbing interest to the particulars of Dick Wrenshaw's fate.

Any sailor will stop in the middle of a story to praise or condemn a man under whom he has sailed, and Ned was no exception, as the reader has seen.

"You know," he continued, "the voyage with Fairfax was the first we made, and that with Steedman, on the *Storm Cloud*, the third. Our captain here was very unlike the other of the ship *Sue Miller*, for he was kind to all, and, when

Joe was sick, sent him many delicacies from his own table.

"We were bound for California after hides, and had rounded the cape well, considering the squally weather.

"Our water ran short, and we put in here, the vessel being brought to beyond the reefs, and a boat coming to the shore.

"I did not go with the boat's crew, and, of course, could not recognize the island, never having put a foot on it; but that slimy, green stone I can never forget, as it was there poor Dick lost his life.

"The men came off with the water and were sent back after more, the second mate, a fine young fellow named Lessing, taking charge.

"Dick was with him, and while they were filling the casks the mate sent him to ask the captain if he would like to have a few goats killed for fresh meat, as they were plenty on the island, and if so to send some muskets with Dick.

"Of course the mate thought the boy would make the signal agreed upon, and which would bring the light whale boat, manned by a couple of rowers to the shore.

"The yawl would be too clumsy for him to man, and besides it was needed to load up the casks.

"For once poor Dick failed to strictly carry out his orders. He was inclined to be impulsive, and this lost him his life.

"Having made the required signal, he threw off his clothes and sprang into the water, determined upon gaining the opening reefs at least before the boat met him.

"Dick was a magnificent swimmer, but he found, as he afterwards did, that although the surface of the water inside the reefs was smooth enough, a swift current ran underneath, against which he was forced to swim.

"Notwithstanding this, he had made a good headway, and was two-thirds of the way to the reefs, when one of the men appeared on the beach rolling a cask of water, I do not know why the yawl was not brought up the creek here instead of being left at the mouth.

"He saw the clothes on the beach, and then the black curly head, and white shoulders of the swimmer.

"Something else he also saw, and this the dorsal fin of a shark not far in the wake of Dick, who was unconscious of his danger.

"For nearly half a moment the man's tongue, as he told me, would persist in sticking to the roof of his mouth.

"Swim for your life, boy. A shark! a shark!"

"Dick must have heard the shout above the roar of the breakers, for he turned his head.

"What he felt, I can't say; but it must have been awful.

"A shark pursuing a man, swims on the surface, and only sinks when it intends catching its prey, as you all know.

"I suppose this peculiarity has saved many a man's life, as it gives him warning.

"You may recollect how I shivered when I heard Jack tell of his adventure with the shark.

"It made me think of poor Dick, but just then I had no idea that both adventures came off in the same place, and, for aught we know, it may be the same shark.

"Dick redoubled his exertions, and drew nearer the reefs.

"I have said before that the current was pretty strong a foot or two below the surface, but this was nothing to its force ten feet under.

"Of course, Dick knew nothing of this, but we found it out afterwards.

"In the afternoon it set in with full force, and the boy was actually breasting a small Gulf Stream.

"Using his ingenuity, he kept as much of his body as possible out of the water, thus evading most of the current.

"As he neared the reefs, the man on the shore saw him grasp something from the water, as he afterwards told me.

"The square green rock was the first haven my poor shipmate gained, and with a scramble he managed to reach the top of it which, as we discovered later, was horribly slimy with green vegetable matter.

"I was one of the rowers in the whale boat, and as we came inside the reefs just then we could see him plainly.

"We pulled desperately toward him, but, being some distance away, we were too late.

"We saw he had a stout stick in his hand about a foot long. Having no weapon of defense, his knife being on the beach with his clothes, Dick had seized upon this stick as it floated upon the water; and had he been an experienced pearl-diver might have saved himself with it.

"Of course, seeing him on the rock, we considered him safe; but it was a fatal mistake. The

rock was wet and very slippery. As he stepped back to avoid a thrust from the shark, he lost his balance and fell over with a splash, greatly to our horror. He sank immediately, and we saw the ravenous fish dart after him.

"Hurrying to the spot, we hunted around, but could see nothing of either shark or boy.

"A red tinge on the water told us the awful tale, and we knew that poor Dick had fallen a victim to the shark.

"The whole crew in our five boats sought for the body, but found it not.

"Then the water-casks were hurried aboard, and we set sail, anxious to leave such a place.

"Afterward we remembered that the poor boy's clothes had been left on the beach in our haste.

"The next time a terrific storm came on, but we worked through it with the loss of one man, some spars, and the whale boat, which was washed over-board toward the end.

"Joe and I felt the loss of poor Dick Wrenshaw keenly, for he was from our town; and I shall never forget how his family took the news. He was a splendid fellow—strong and good natured, and knew almost everything—like Tom here."

"Thank you," returned the individual in question.

"No thanks required. Now, Joe, you know how Dick lost his life off this very island in the smooth water inside the reefs. Poor fellow, I'll never forget him," said Ned.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAYS THAT BECAME MONOTONOUS—THE BOAT COMPLETED—A GALE IN PROSPECT—OUR TRIAL TRIP—THE WAR OF THE ELEMENTS—THE FASCINATION OF A TROPICAL STORM—TOM MAKES READY FOR A YARN.

"Poor fellow," echoed Joe, and I saw him dash away a tear. "I liked Dick, and I don't believe I ever felt so bad as when they told me he was dead. It was fearful."

"I'd like to have known him," said Tom earnestly.

"And you'd have stuck to him like a brother, Tom, for he was very much like you. Having no one else around his age on board, he kept with Joe and me. He was a regular walking book, and knew heaps about trees and animals," put in Ned.

"Natural history, you mean," said Tom.

"Yes, that's just it. He spent a year in Africa, and we used to sit for hours listening to his yarns, all true, about the elephants, gorillas and lions that he had hunted."

Having reached our hut, the conversation dropped, but for days after I kept thinking of poor Dick Wrenshaw.

Quietly the night passed.

As no marks had of late been seen around our pig pen, we did not set either of the traps.

Early morning found us on our feet, and before the sun was half an hour high we were at the place of labor, having left Joe at home.

Ned looked attentively at the log for a moment, as he had not seen it before, and then throwing off his coat, went to work with a will.

Slowly the morning passed.

Noon was spent on the mossy ground, and after our hour's respite we tackled the log again, laboring without cessation until near sundown.

We were careful to put our tools in a hollow tree, where in case it rained they would be safe, and after doing this we started towards home.

Joe had prepared a fine supper, and after it we took a refreshing bath.

In this way the days flew on, and the work progressed finely.

The coypus we stopped trapping after running the number of skins up to twenty, as the innocent little creatures seemed so unsuspecting that we never failed to find one in each trap every day.

Should we remain on our island home through the winter, they might prove useful to us, but according to our calculations, in two weeks' time we would leave for the main land.

Our night lines did good service, and once a day we made a fine meal from the fish caught on them.

The two weeks drew to an end, and our boat was near completion.

We had worked steadily at it, but one day out of every seven we set apart for rest, as Tom declared we would never succeed if we labored on the Sabbath, in which we all agreed.

Our time we passed in conversation about our dear homes and the prospect of reaching them again.

During this period Ned and Joe pursued and killed a fourth bear, so that each of us had a skin for a trophy.

The goats and pigs were getting on finely, and we had killed one of each for fresh meat.

On the hilltop our pole still stood firm, and the bunting waved in the breeze.

One storm visited us during this time, and although it kept us from work a whole day, no damage was done.

The boy who remained at the cabin occupied his time in shaping oars, which though a trifle rough looking, could be depended upon.

Four rollers had been made to roll the boat down to the water.

Tom had entered into all sorts of mathematical calculations that none of us understood, to see if our vessel would float properly, and he at length announced that it would.

At last the boat was done. It was a great time for us I can assure you, and all the work remaining was to get it into the water.

This occupied the whole of a morning, and as the oars were at the cabin, we would be obliged to get them, before our vessel could be brought into the creek.

As we passed along the hillside, Tom proposed a trip to the top, where we could see the island house we hoped to leave so soon.

It seemed strange to us that no ship had come within sight of the island during the daytime, as we were not far out of the usual track.

We passed the cave in front of which our goat-trap was situated. As the sticks were covered with earth they had the appearance of solid ground, and although a goat might pass over in safety, now that the pit was closed, none of us felt like trusting our weight on them.

Gaining the top of the hill we looked around us.

The ocean was calm, but we all saw that before many hours they would be a surging mass.

Away down in the southern horizon a low bank of clouds slowly advanced.

Having taken a satisfactory view, we hurriedly descended to the cabin, laid hold of our four oars and set off again.

The boat floated finely, and glided through the water like a thing of life, our weight appearing as almost nothing in it.

Tom, who was a reliable judge, pronounced it entirely seaworthy and we were satisfied.

After being confined to hard carpenter work for almost three weeks, rowing was but sport to us, and we enjoyed it hugely.

After rounding several small capes that jutted out, we came in sight of the creek, and at a word from Tom the boat was sent out to the square green rock, near which poor Dick Wrenshaw had met his fate. The only strange thing to us was how the boy managed to climb on to it from the water, and remain there as long as he did.

After contemplating the slimy affair for a moment, we rowed up the creek and sunk the boat near the cabin, putting huge rocks in it, and tying ropes to both ends.

After eating supper and attending to our animals and fowls, we put on some old clothes and went down to the beach to see the gale come on.

Even now there is a strange fascination for me in a storm at sea.

I dearly love to watch the mighty foam-crested billows, knowing at the same time, that in half an hour they may form my tomb; to see the zig-zag lightning playing in fantastic streaks, and hear the roar of the thunder and the shrieks of the wind.

Upon reaching the beach, we saw what a change had come upon all nature.

Old Boreas had come with the clouds, and the water in our lagoon might be called a "chopping-sea," while beyond the reefs the waves dashed noisily against their rocky barrier.

The storm was just about to commence, the thunder that we had heard rumbling in the distance, came closer every moment, while the vivid lightning thrust itself hither and thither in the south.

It was a real tropical storm when it came.

The thunder rattled like heaven's artillery, and the lightning seemed to be one constant flash.

Down came the rain in torrents, but as the wind grew fiercer, the water fell more lightly.

Night had unconsciously drawn its curtains around us, but we should never have known it, so incessant were the flashes of Jove's fireworks.

Never will I forget the sublime picture we four water-logged boys gazed upon that night, with the elements warring savagely about us, until the air seemed ready to split with the concussions.

Now and then we could see over the reefs, and the mighty ocean looked like one endless waste of moving hills with snow-covered summits.

For half an hour longer we stood spell-bound, admiring the splendid mechanism of the Maker of the universe.

The huge billows swept up almost to our feet, although we stood among the trees, and had there been no reefs to break their force, we should undoubtedly have lost our chattels and domestic

animals, and have been obliged to climb the hill to escape their fury.

After gazing at the storm until the rest declared themselves tired, we walked up to the hut and put on dry clothes.

Then we went to bed, and managed to sleep in spite of the warring elements outside, for we were all sailors.

When we awoke in the morning we knew the storm was still raging by the patter of rain and an occasional rumble of thunder.

There was no chance of leaving the island this day; and seeing so, we resolved to pack up what few things we needed especially to take with us.

Of course we would have to leave nine-tenths of our things behind; but we hoped to reach a seaport, and ship in some vessel bound for Boston or New York that would pass our island, when we could lay hands on our possessions again.

While we worked Joe begged Tom to relate us a regular sea yarn to while away the time, and as I added my entreaties, our leader at length gave his consent.

The narrative I fail to find in Tom's log-book, and must write it out from memory alone, so the reader will please excuse the want of conciseness, as that quality is always lacking in a sailor's story.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MAN OF ILL LUCK—THE OLD JACK-TAR'S REMINISCENCE—QUELLING A MUTINY—A SAILOR'S SUPERSTITION—SENDING A JONAH ADrift—A CARD OF THANKS—THE NEW PASSENGER—CONSTERNATION—BEN BUCKET'S OPINION.

"You know Jack," (Tom was aware of my liking for sea tales, and invariably addressed me) "that I commenced as a cabin boy. I have been a sailor now almost eight years, and of course during that time have seen many foreign countries, and heard many strange adventures, besides passing through a few. When I was on board the good ship *Ocean Queen*, bound from Boston to Liverpool and return, I was some fifteen years old. Over there we had fair weather, but on our return we encountered gales a greater part of the way across. The men began their customary growling, and this soon came near breaking out into open mutiny. At first I didn't know what it meant, but was not long in finding out. As a class sailors are ignorant and superstitious; their lonely life makes them so, and they delight in what they believe to be true stories of ghosts and graveyard goblins. At Liverpool we had taken a passenger for New York by way of Boston. He told the captain he had special business in the latter place, and after completing which, he would go to New York. He was an old man, very strange looking, with a grizzly beard and iron-gray hair that came down on his shoulders. He did not seem to be very rich, and yet he evidently had money. Now, you may laugh, Jack, but the sailors swore that it was this harmless old man who had brought on these gales; in fact, they declared him a Jonah. In their minds this individual is one who brings ill luck with him wherever he goes, and of course they hate one whom they suspect to be a Jonah. At first they spoke respectfully to the captain, telling him what they thought, and asking that the man be made to leave the ship, or else they would never reach Boston.

"The captain swore a mighty oath that he would do no such thing; the old man was a gentleman who had paid his passage in good hard gold, and to Boston he should go if the ship held out, and if not then they would all go down together.

"After their defeat the men retired in good order but mumbling like true Jack Tars.

"On the following day another storm came on, and the vessel came near going down with all on board.

"During the time, the old man, who I suppose was a lover of nature in her wilder moods stood near the wheelman, his long hair floating in the wind, and his general appearance almost frightening the sailors.

"When the sea became calm, the crew marched in a body with but few exceptions to the captain, and once more laid their grievance before him.

"This put him in a terrible rage; he stamped up and down the deck like an enraged tiger, and declared that the next man who mentioned the word 'Jonah' to him should be clapped in irons.

"Again the sailors went away but I saw mysterious consultations and signals and knew something was going on; therefore I was not greatly amazed, when on the following morning, the startling news came to us that the captain's gig was missing and with it had vanished the old man.

"In spite of the indignant captain's questioning, he could get no information out of the men.

"Only two or three were intimately concerned,

and he could not discover them to mete out a punishment.

"A few days after this, I was in the maintop assisting the old sailor who had been spokesman of the crew, to mend some of the rigging, when the conversation naturally turned upon men of ill-luck, and I asked for his first experience in that line.

"He saw that I liked to hear yarns, and as it suited him to be the 'spinner,' he began:

"My first experience with a 'Jonah' wasn't near as bad as I've seen since, but I'll give it to ye," said old Ben Bucket as he was called by reason of a trick he had been wont to have of dropping his slush bucket upon the backs of offensive officers—certainly an ingenious accident.

"I first shipped on board the 'Tigress,' bound out from New York, many years ago. We had a good captain, but the mates were sour, cranky fellows. Our crew was a nasty one; I don't think I ever sailed with a worse. There were many dark faces among 'em, and having my idea of a jovial sea dog, I was actually afraid of 'em. I don't know how the captain came to get such a lot, but certainly men were scarce when he picked these up. One day the mate, a Yankee, told Dale Hurst, the bad egg of the crew, to go aloft for something, but the impudent scoundrel refused point blank, saying he was tired, though he hadn't been doing much work. Again the mate ordered and the man failed to obey. Seeing that force would be used, he picked up a handspike, but the mate was not fool enough to attack him. Pulling out a pistol and his watch, he gave the fellow just sixty seconds to obey, and if he had failed then, would have shot him like a dog.

"Dale Hurst dropped the handspike and ran sullenly up the rigging.

"I knew he was a sort of ringleader among the men, and that there would be mischief brewing. A few days after, I saw a crowd of the crew near the main hatch, and, suspecting danger, I managed to go below, and, with the aid of a short ladder, got within hearing distance of 'em.

"Then I heard the most murderous plot on record to seize the ship and make away with the captain and all others but the mate, by setting them adrift.

"This latter individual was to be left to Dale Hurst's tender mercy.

"Having heard the particulars of the plan, I hurried to the captain, and in the secrecy of his cabin, told him all.

"He was not disconcerted in the least, but opening a trunk, showed me a supply of various fire-arms.

"There were three passengers on board, and these with the officers, a sailor who I knew had joined the league, and myself made eight in all. Friday morning had been set apart for the mutiny, and before daybreak the crew were cutting up all sorts of shins on deck, rolling things about and shouting themselves hoarse.

"When the eight of us came on deck, they made a rush forward, yelling out threats, but you ought to have seen 'em cower before the guns and pistols we carried.

"They gave in at once, and all of 'em were pardoned by the captain but Hurst, and he was put in irons below with a guard over him day and night.

"You may think this a queer beginning," continued old Ben, rolling his quid to the opposite cheek, 'about how I saw my first Jonah, but I thought I'd give you this to show you I wasn't bad hearted, even if I did help to put that first ill luck cuss on an island.

"When we got into port, Hurst was sent into prison, and most of the crew given their walking papers.

"We made up the people with some men who had deserted from an American man-of-war. Their captain was a beast, and had killed one poor fellow, so they made tracks at London and came to Liverpool.

"They stuck to their word and joined us. Afterwards they proved to be first-class boys, and our old man was nager sorry he took 'em in.

"Well, we had a Jonah on board, and he was like the one that we had here. Shiver my timbers, he was the image of him, and I'd like to bet it's the same man! I objected to this, for the sailor was speaking of a period some thirty years back, and an old man of that time must certainly have since died.

"But he was a Jonah, and they never die. The ship sinks but they are always saved," declared Ben, and I did not argue the matter with him, seeing how useless it was. "Well," he continued, chewing vigorously at his quid as sailors in books do, you know, boys, 'it wasn't long after leaving port that the storms came on, and dash my topknots but they were stunners. Soon I heard the word 'Jonah' passed around, and got

to hate the old critter as bad as any of 'em. One night we all went and had a consultation. We determined to get rid of the old man, even if we had to throw him into the sea, and there wouldn't be any harm in that as a Jonah can't sink. Well, when we sighted the next island, we shut the officers in the cabins, and put the old critter on the shore. The captain threatened a good deal when he got out, but couldn't do anything. Nothing ever happened to us; that's the way I got rid of my Jonah, and I've helped many a time since.

"If the old man died on the island, that would have proved him anything but a Jonah," said I, seriously.

"But he didn't," grinned the sailor, 'shiver my topsails, when we landed at York who should be waiting for us but the Jonah himself. He had been taken off the island by a fast vessel and got to Boston ahead of us. We all shivered in our shoes, for we thought it was a bad go, but he proved to be a jolly fellow. He came on board, had the crew mustered aft, and dash me if he didn't express himself under obligations to us for what we had done, for it put him in the way of reaching port just in the neck of time to sign an important document. It was a regular card of thanks, as the papers said."

"And now, boys," continued Tom, laughing, "comes the funny part. The storm did miraculously cease after we had parted with our Jonah, and a day out from port we were spoken by a vessel bound for New York, who asked if we were for Boston, and upon our replying in the affirmative asked us to take a passenger. Wanting to make a little extra money, our captain proved willing, and a boat came alongside. Judge of our amazement, when the passenger reached our deck to find in him the identical old man who had been called a Jonah.

"He afterwards told me, that as it was very dark he had not recognized those who had put him in the captain's gig, and no action was ever taken in the matter. They had provisioned him for two weeks, and after floating around for several days had at length been picked up. After getting our gig from the other ship, we went on our course. At first the men were fearfully mad at the bad success attending them, and I caught old Ben winking at me as if to say:

"Didn't I tell you a Jonah always turns up like a bad penny?"

"We reached port all right, and our Jonah departed. I didn't believe in the matter at all, and desirous of finding out the old sailor's opinion, I asked him one day why the Jonah had not brought storms with him when he came on board a second time.

"Ben Bucket turned toward me, and with one eye tightly closed, and the other leering in a way highly original and comical, announced it as his mind that:

"The rascal knew there were men on board who wouldn't stand any nonsense. If he tried the game again, shiver my larboard quarter if he wouldn't have gone over the rail like a porpoise."

"So much, boys, for superstition. It is the meanest thing in the world, for you can never argue with a man who finds excuses in the supernatural. Deliver me from being seized with it. And now, gentlemen, I move we have dinner."

CHAPTER XV.

A SUSPICIOUS SMOKE—WRECK IN OUR LAGOON—ON BOARD THE VESSEL—A SCOUTING TOUR—WE ARE BESET BY SAVAGES—PREPARATIONS FOR THEIR RECEPTION—THE BRASS CANNON SAVES US—QUITE A STAMPEDE.

The morning had been spent in packing up, and at Tom's suggestion we resolved to have dinner.

Just before noon the storm ceased, but it would be several hours before the sun and wind combined could dry the ground.

At length we ventured forth, and found that the swollen creek had resumed its natural size, and that our boat was not injured in the least.

Raising it, we washed the mud off, and then left it to dry in the sun.

We now resolved to visit the hill-top for the last time, and take a parting view of our island home, where so many pleasant days had been passed.

The storm had done very little damage on the shore, but must have proved disastrous to vessels along the coast, as all united in declaring it a boomer.

Naturally, when we reached a spot beside the signal-pole, we scanned the broad expanse of water for a sail, and seeing none, turned our attention to the land.

Tom it was who suddenly gave a cry of alarm, and springing back, pulled the rest of us with him

"Don't show yourselves above the top of the hill, for Heaven's sake!" said he, excitedly.

"What on earth—" began Joe.

"Peep over carefully, Joe. Look at the southern end of the island. What do you see?"

"Smoke," was the terse reply.

"Fire is necessary to make smoke, and human beings to start fire."

"A fact, certainly," I asserted.

"Then there's some one on the island besides ourselves. Let me take another look, Jack."

"There's something on the beach, Tom," said I, moving back.

"A canoe, unless I am greatly mistaken. I can just see it over the trees," and upon our looking again, we declared that Tom was right.

This proved that there must be a good many persons, and we sat down to talk over our situation. Two chances opened before us; the newcomers were either shipwrecked sailors, or else we had visitors like poor Robinson Crusoe, in the shape of the cannibal, fire-worshipping natives of Patagonia. Most probably they would prove to be the latter, for the last certainly looked like a fantastic canoe, and not the long-boat of a ship.

Should we be captured by the demons (for the natives of Patagonia are cannibals and pure savages without a redeeming quality), our fate would be horrible indeed.

But why need we think of being captured? Had we not arms of all descriptions, and a boat which might be made serviceable?

No doubt we would have decided to load up and set out on our contemplated voyage at once, but the sea was still too rough for anything like safety.

Hardly had we concluded to defend ourselves in our cabin and cave, when my eyes, in roving around, fell upon an object that sent the blood leaping to my head.

In the direction of the mouth of the creek, and just above the tree-tops was the object that had attracted my attention, and which looked marvelously like the mast of a ship.

For a full moment I was powerless to move or speak, and my comrades looked anxiously at me, thinking I had taken a fit, but at length I managed to direct their attention to the welcome sight.

"Hurrah! a ship! a ship!" exclaimed Ned.

"Dash my timbers if it ain't," cried Joe.

"Boys," said wise Ned, after a scrutiny, "don't you see that mast's broken? No doubt it's a deserted wreck, but it will be a windfall to us anyhow."

Our opinion about the fire now assumed different aspects; there was a chance of the originators being shipwrecked mariners, after all, who had this strange-looking canoe on board, and were forced to use it.

It is very easy to make a plausible argument when one is more than half convinced.

The vessel had been driven on the island during the night, and been deserted by the crew when she struck on the reefs.

Afterwards the ship had got off from the reefs, and shifted her quarters, seeking an anchorage nearer the shore.

I must confess, however, that we failed to comprehend how the vessel managed to find the opening, and while she landed at one end of the island while the crew found a haven at the other.

A council of war was the next thing in order, and Tom, with his customary ability, soon had affairs arranged.

He took it upon himself to make a scouting tour to the southern end of the island, while the rest of us brought our possessions, so far as was possible, on board of the deserted ship.

If those who started the fire were sailors we would assist them in refitting their vessel, then sail for home.

On the other hand, should they prove to be savages, we would be safer on board than on the shore.

Having reached this determination, we started out.

As Ned and Joe and myself emerged from the trees, the ship lay before us.

She had the appearance of a trading vessel, and yet amidships something gleamed in the sunlight that looked very much like a partly covered brass cannon.

Her three masts had gone by the board, nothing remaining but the stumps, and the wreck had doubtless been cut away, for we saw none of it.

The deserted vessel was some ten feet beyond the wall of our swimming inclosure, and a long plank would have reached her deck from the stone rampart.

After loading our boat with many parcels we rowed down the creek, and boarding the ship, hoisted our articles to the deck.

After a running tour in all quarters, we found that the vessel was really deserted.

One of the quarter boats still hung from the

davits, and we were not long in getting this alongside of our own dugout.

When Tom made his appearance just before sunset, we had everything on board, and after he joined us the boats were hauled up.

What he told us created quite a *furor* in the camp, for we found that instead of shipwrecked sailors, our visitors were savages.

There was only one boat, but Tom declared that the cannibals must number somewhere around thirty, and horrible looking men they were too from his description.

Doubtless they were bound on some expedition, but were blown ashore by the wind preceding the storm.

"What is worse, they have seen our signal on the hill, and the last I saw of them they were making preparations to pay us a visit, with murderous intent, no doubt. Unless something happens I am afraid there will be blood shed before morning. There is no help for it, boys; it may be our lives or theirs, and even Divine law gives a man the right to protect himself. A cannon on board here would save us. It is too late to bring our bulky affair from the hill," said Tom, for we had drawn the article in question half way up in order to signal any ship.

"Here you are, then," I said, uncovering the long brass gun. Tom actually hugged the beauty, and declaring himself as happy as a king, set about cleaning it out, while the rest of us piled every firearm we owned on deck, loaded them, and arranged them along the bulwarks nearest the shore.

While engaged in this work, Tom told us all he had seen, and we agreed with him in pronouncing it a successful scout, for he had watched the enemy and yet remained hidden himself.

Thus hours passed on; the moon wheeled higher in the heavens; midnight came and went and still no signs of our expected visitors. We concluded that they had deferred their visit until the morrow on account of the approach of darkness and the unfamiliar ground, and went, to sleep in hammocks on deck, one of us keeping watch for an hour, and then turning in after awaking the next in order.

Morning found matters as they had been when night closed in, and leaving Joe on deck, the rest of us went below to spy around, or, as a boy would say, "to rummage."

By means of the ship's books we were not long in finding that we were on board the *Jessie Gray*, bound from New York to California, and then to London.

The name, beautiful in itself, struck me as familiar; but, try as I would, I could not place it, for the names of the owners seemed to be missing in the book. She was well laden with articles intended for the San Francisco and mine markets, and would have been a fine prize for such a privateer as the *Philo*. The log-book was a new one, the old being missing, so we only found out what had happened during the last six weeks or so, and the last record was a miserable jotting of a terrible storm they were in off the cape. Of course the crew had either deserted or were washed overboard, and as the principal books were missing, we concluded that the former was the case.

It was perhaps the middle of the morning when a warning cry from Joe brought us tumbling on deck. We saw a crowd of ill-looking black wretches, armed with huge clubs and having a horrible look, issuing from the woods. They gave a screech at the sight of the ship, and started to rush forward, but came to an abrupt halt at sight of us.

We stood firm; indeed Tom, who had seen service, took occasion afterward to commend our gallant behavior. At the time, I must have had strange sensations, for the idea forced itself upon me that these black fellows were huge baboons, which indeed they greatly resembled.

Our acquaintance with the cannibals, made famous by our illustrious predecessor, Robinson Crusoe, was destined to be very brief. A few moments of hurried consultation, and they began to slowly advance toward the vessel, but our leader noticed their hesitating manner.

"Boys, it's all right," said he, joyfully, "these fellows are afraid. Don't shoot any of them, but watch me send 'em scampering back from where they came."

It was quite evident to all of us that the savages could never have been close to a ship, before from their movements, and this assured us that the discharge of firearms would alarm them. Tom snatched a red hot iron from the little furnace used with charcoal for the purpose, and clapped it upon the touch-hole. There was a puff of white smoke; then a tremendous discharge with a peculiar ring in it, that echoed over the whole island, and shook the vessel violently. A pleasant breeze was blowing, and this quickly cleared the dense volumes of smoke

away. From my position I could see the sand fly up like a whirlwind had struck it, and throwing dirt all over the score or more of black imps.

Terrified did you say, reader? In all my life I have never seen human beings so utterly demoralized with fear. Indeed they seemed frozen to the spot at first; but recovering the use of their limbs they bounded into the forest, and for some time afterwards we could hear their eldritch shrieks echoing among the trees and gradually growing fainter. Upon being convinced that we were saved without bloodshed, we silently shook hands, and the earnest grip spoke volumes, for we thought of the kind Providence above us, even though no one spoke aloud.

Tom declared it his intention of visiting the hill-top with a telescope and ascertaining whether the savages really left the island, for unless assured as to this we could never feel at ease.

He started off laden down with weapons, and with Joe for company. Ned and myself busied ourselves in various ways on board, and then sat down to take it easy.

I took the captain's new log-book, and had no difficulty in deciphering its contents, as the chirography was very plain. Among other interesting things I found the following jotting:

"June 7th.—To-day we had a little engagement with a rebel cruiser, a most ferocious fellow. He found we carried too many guns for him, and the breeze being favorable, we got beyond his reach. Mr. Stanton, my second officer, and myself, agree that it must have been the well-known privateer *Red Monarch*. Position at the time, very near the 48th deg. South latitude, 63d deg. West longitude from Greenwich. Hull of cruiser, a vivid red, slashed jauntily here and there with black. Carries four guns, and a red flag besides the Confederate colors. Is not so well armed or manned as has been reported."

The part about "too many guns" would have puzzled me, but that I had already discovered three rusty cannon down below which bore unmistakable signs of recent use. Evidently they had been pressed into service at this time, and used by determined men.

Tom and Joe did not put in an appearance until almost evening, but they brought good news, for from their lookout on the hill-top they had seen the savages hurriedly embark and move away in a south-easterly direction, as if quite panic-stricken.

CHAPTER XVI.

ANOTHER RECOLLECTION—AMONG THE PEARL-DIVERS—AN EXCITING RACE—FOUL PLAY—TOM'S STRATAGEM—UNDER THE WATER—THE PEARL BANK—THE SENTINEL SHARK—BLINDING AN OLD LINER—RATHER A PROFITABLE INVESTMENT.

THIS was good news to us, and we ate a hearty supper with a feeling of comfort and security. It was Tom who declared every one of us to be stanch, loyal heroes, and sailors to the backbone, and his praise was so pleasant that we felt taller than ever before.

Our ship, as we were pleased to term it, was built after the shapely model of American vessels, and bore no resemblance to the huge, clumsy Dutch galliots we, especially Tom, had seen so often. The hatches had been battened down, and, strangely enough, there was very little water in the hold.

After supper we stretched ourselves upon the deck, and while enjoying the fine breeze, my cousin called for a song from Ned, who first exacted a promise of a yarn, and then gave us a ditty which he had heard from some chum, and which was called:

"THE DROWNED AT SEA."

"Never bronze or slab of stone
Shall their sepulcher denote,
O'er their burial-place alone,
Shall the shifting seaweed float.
Not for them the quiet grave,
Underneath the daisied turf—
They rest below the restless wave,
They sleep below the sleepless surf;
O'er them shall the waters wrestle,
With the whirlwind from the land.

"But their bones will only nestle
Closer down into the sand;
And, forever, wind and surge,
Loud or low shall be their dirge;
And each idle wave that breaks,
Henceforth on any shore,
Shall be dearer for their sake—
Shall be holier evermore."

It was certainly no song; only a poetic tribute to the dead, but Ned accompanied the words with a strange, weird tune that seemed to suit them exactly.

Where the poem came from, I do not know.

Whether it is the production of some talented writer, or originated with the owner of an old log-book I hold in my hand, I will, perhaps, never know, as he, poor fellow, has gone the way of all flesh. At any rate it is a gem worth saving.

Tom was very modest in speaking about his own exploits, although ever ready to praise others, and this fault only served to make us like him the better.

"That story about the shark the other night reminds me of an adventure I once had, and as I've never given it to you, I don't mind telling the whole affair. To me it was a pretty dangerous scrape, although common enough in those regions. You see, boys," continued Tom, "I was only a plain sailor in those days, although I had my aspirations.

"It was on the bonny little vessel, the *White Witch*, and we lay off the coast of Lower California, near the pearl fisheries.

"In the daytime, many boats could be seen, each with some two divers, who were generally natives. The owners of the boats prefer natives, as all of them are expert divers.

"They go down to the bottom, fill a basket or bag with oysters, and then come up, after which the bivalves are drawn up.

"They descend from fifty to two hundred times a day, and the yield of a single boat in oysters is tremendous, although pearls are not so plenty as one might think.

"The divers are rewarded generally by a share in the spoils, and thus when a man is lucky, it serves to his own advantage.

"These fisheries are almost given out now, I hear, but further north on the coast of Washington Territory, they are embarking in the business.

"During our stay the captain had looked on with envious eyes. We had business here, and were compelled to lie idle for two weeks, waiting for hides from the interior.

"On the third day the captain called all hands before him, and disclosed a plan he had formed. The ship was to put out a boat, with the two best swimmers on board as divers.

"They were to have a third of all the booty, and be released from all work while on the coast. Each of them was to take one of the ship's boats, with a couple of sailors to aid him, and selecting his own place, set to work.

"The morning was to be spent in diving, but during the rest of the day they were granted liberty to do as they pleased, and roam about the shore. This announcement created quite an excitement among the crew, and the two so lucky as to become divers were sure to be envied.

"One thing puzzled the captain, and this was to find out the best swimmers. Every one of the twenty men, under the excitement of the moment, declared himself a champion, and this bewildered our officer.

"Of course the men were lying, for few of them were good swimmers, and some could not even keep themselves afloat.

"Our mate at length proposed a plan, which was ultimately carried out. We were to have a swimming race, and the two reaching the goal ahead of the others would win.

"The men could say nothing against this, for it was fair enough, but seven of them immediately withdrew from the contest, and I afterwards learned from their own lips that they might as well attempt to fly as swim, never having learned.

"Our race was to be half a mile in length, and two of the boats put out, containing these seven men. One of them was stationed and anchored the full distance from the ship, and the other took up a position half-way between to pick up all laggards in the race.

"There were thirteen of us in the water ready to start. Before we started the captain told us everything was fair, and I saw by the way several of the men looked at me, that they had determined to give me as much trouble as possible.

"I afterwards learned the reason of this. Besides myself, there were two well-known fine swimmers in the crew, Burton and Bailey.

"The former was the best of the two, and Bailey knew it. He had promised some of the men a share in the spoils if they retarded one of us, and, as I was the youngest, they had selected me as the victim.

"Away we started when the signal was given, but some of the men kicked about me, impeding my progress, and it was some time before I got out of their clutches.

"Ahead of me were four sailors, and beyond them, and very near the half-way boat, were Burton and Bailey, side by side. Five splurges placed me up with the four men.

"As they meanly made a grab at me, I dived underneath them, and coming up in front, dashed onward.

"In this dive I learned something that afterwards proved of advantage to me.

"Under the water a swift current set in toward the stake-boat, although no one would suspect such a fact to look at the calm surface.

"When Burton and Bailey reached the half-way boat, I was quite a distance, almost an eighth of a mile behind them, and the sailors laughed at me as I came up, saying I had no chance; but I wisely kept my mouth closed, and increased my speed.

"On we went, rapidly nearing the stake-boat. I was by far the youngest of the three, and had the sympathy of the men, although they had no idea of my winning.

"Had the race been really fair, I should have had a sure thing of it; but my delay in the start, at which the captain was afterwards very indignant, and for which he apologized like a true sailor, had put me back.

"Burton and Bailey were now within fifty yards of the stake-boat, and as I was a third of that distance behind them, the race seemed settled.

"The former was in advance of Bailey; but for this he cared little, as he would be second at any rate.

"Suddenly, I sank out of sight, going down into the swift current that carried me along with the velocity of a mill-race.

"But a few seconds passed away, and then I came up again.

"My judgment was as near perfection as one could wish for, as I was several yards on the other side of the stake-boat.

"Its occupants were intent on the two swimmers, now within a dozen yards of the boat, and knew nothing of my proximity until I clambered in and gave a shout.

"This was echoed from all quarters, and Burton, who came ahead of his rival, shook me by the hand, and complimented me on such a brilliant exploit, as he was pleased to term it.

"Bailey sat and scowled as we were rowed back to the ship by the four men, but never said a word.

"You know, boys, what sailors are? Ever after that I was a favorite among the men, and those who so meanly tried to stop me, begged pardon with true Jack Tar bluntness. And now I will move on to the yarn about the shark, which is not very long, however.

"On this day we arranged matters and selected our men.

"In the morning each of us started away with two men, and all the apparatus necessary for the work.

"It being a novel business to me, I felt rather awkward, and it was not until several days had elapsed that I became used to it.

"Luckily, I had struck on a fine bank, and hoisted the oysters in such a way that Burton declared could not be beaten.

"Of course all the clothing I had on was a strip of cloth about the loins, secured by a narrow belt, in which was a sharp knife. This latter we sometimes used in detaching stubborn bivalves. A stick about a foot long, and pointed at both ends, was carried also.

"Day after day I worked, and as yet had seen nothing of sharks, although several were reported in the vicinity.

"It was not until just before leaving the coast that one of these horrible fellows made his appearance.

"I had just gone down, and was about to commence work, when, upon looking upward, I beheld the body of a shark.

"Boys, imagine my horror at the sight.

"One of the natives would have thought it a splendid chance for fun; but to me it was anything but a laughing matter.

"I immediately stopped loading the basket, and attempted to leave my quondam acquaintance behind.

"Moving along for about twenty feet, I was about to rise by casting off my stone weight, when I saw, to my despair, that the terrible fish was directly above me.

"The cold-blooded scoundrel had followed me as I walked along.

"Even now I can see him in imagination, as he stood guardedly flapping his fins and tail and waiting to make a meal when I came up.

"Of course I did not intend letting him dine from such a delicate morsel if I could help it, although how to escape him seemed an unsolvable enigma. I resolved, however, that if it came to a fight I would do my best to kill him.

"The natives fear no shark, provided they have a stick, which is thrust between the monster's open jaws so that he eventually drowns.

"I made another attempt to elude his vigilance, and moved almost another score of feet away, but it was a useless endeavor.

"My situation was now becoming quite des-

perate, and I came near having it out tooth and nail with the shark, when an idea I had read of flashed into my head.

"I was on a sandy bank, and this could be stirred up with my stick until even the shark's eyes would fail to see the direction I took. No sooner thought of than done. Under cover of the sand-cloud I found the rope to which the basket was attached. My brain seemed as if on fire, and my eyes half starting from their sockets, the result of holding my breath so long. Indeed, I doubt if a keener agony could be compressed into as many seconds. Nevertheless I managed to reach the surface, and was hauled into the boat by men more dead than alive.

"After this nothing could coax me to go down again, and Burton also threw up the job when he heard of my adventure. The next day we set sail, leaving a third of our oysters with the Government, as a sort of tax they exact. Out of my share I found many pearls, some of them beauties. One I have at home now, the rest sold for three hundred dollars in New York. Burton got over two hundred for his, and the captain quite a sum, while Bailey looked on with a black face when we showed our trophies. The natives think very little of a shark, for with a knife or even a pointed stick they can kill one about as easily as you, Jack, would shoot a coon, but I can tell you it will be a long time before I quite forget my adventure under the water off the coast of Lower California."

CHAPTER XVII.

SWINGING IN A HAMMOCK—OLD MEMORIES—SOME SCIENTIFIC SHOOTING—THE DOUBLE REPORT—TURTLE STRUCK AGAIN—A DESPERATE PULL—JOE AND NED GET A DUCKING—AM I ASLEEP OR AWAKE—THE RED MONARCH.

By the time Tom finished his shark story, we discovered that our eyes were growing very heavy from want of sleep on the preceding night, and a unanimous vote was declared to turn in.

In order to get the benefit of the cool breeze and avoid the closeness of the cabin, we arranged the hammocks on deck, slinging them in places to suit ourselves.

The excitement consequent upon our recent adventures acted upon my mind in a queer way, and though I had seemed very drowsy at first, I found it utterly impossible to sleep.

Not knowing what else to do, I lay in my hammock, and began to ruminate in a sleepy kind of way, my thoughts naturally traveling back along the labyrinth of adventures that had befallen me, until I reached the eventful day on which I had gone fishing to make a choice of a profession.

How distinctly I remembered all of my boyish scrapes; indeed, it seemed but a few days since I left home, and that the events of the past months were but phantasmagoric dreams or delusions of the mind.

How I regretted now, when too late, my indecision in regard to my future.

Regrets always come when too late for any real good, and I resolved mentally to have no occasion for them after this.

But for my undecided mind I might, at that moment, be surrounded by friends in my dear home, instead of being a castaway in the great Pacific.

It was not this that bothered me then, but the agony my relatives must have suffered believing me dead.

As regarded the Crusoe part of the business, I half enjoyed it, being possessed, as was said at the commencement of this story, of an adventurous nature that continually craved excitement in some shape.

Thus I lay in my hammock, reviewing my whole past life, and my queer wakefulness brought to mind another time when the same thing had proved of great benefit to both my cousin and myself.

A couple of years before, when Tom's ship was laid upon the docks, he and I had made a trip into Maine for hunting and fishing.

We camped out in the vast forest, and on a certain night I found it impossible to sleep, even after my long tramp.

Something seemed weighing on my mind, as very lucky it proved for us that I did remain awake, for about midnight I caught sight of a huge, savage bear making his way noiselessly toward us.

We had been hunting this very fellow all day, and he had come to give us a call.

He was close to where Tom lay, and would certainly have been upon my cousin in another moment, but for the rapidity with which I raised my rifle and fired.

The shot only broke his leg, but it kept him back until Tom leaped to a safe distance.

Seeing that we were too many for him, bruin turned and fled, with both of us in full pursuit.

In spite of our efforts, he eluded us in the dark forest.

When morning came on, we took up the bloody trail, and soon came upon a couple of old bear-hunters, who were looking at the marks with interest.

They declared the bear badly wounded, and agreed to join us on conditions to which we of course assented.

An hour later we came upon our shaggy friend, toiling along, and one of our new friends quickly put him out of misery, the skin and some of the meat coming to us for our share.

While thinking over this, my eyes became very heavy, and as my thoughts grew vague, I sank to sleep.

When morning came on I heard Tom's cry of "Show a leg here, you fellows," followed by a poetic outburst on the glories of the rising sun.

Breakfast was quickly dispatched (not by telegraph, but by good teeth), and then we proceeded to have a talk.

During this we decided that it would be best to remain in our comfortable quarters a week or two longer; and then if nothing happened, we would lash our dugout alongside of the ship's quarter-boat, and make sail for the coast of Chili.

We would leave all our possessions on board, except the animals and fowls, and under Tom's directions these were brought back to their respective habitations.

Luckily the savages had not come across our little village, and everything was just as we had left it.

With the last load of goats we brought a water cask, which was filled above the cascade, and carried on board for future use.

The grapes on the island were now fully ripe, and we took quite a supply on board with us, for they made a delicious wine, which, when fresh, as we used it, even the strictest temperance folks could not object to, as it would not intoxicate any more than coffee.

The afternoon was spent in reading some books of adventure and exploration found in the captain's library, and in practicing with a fine rifle that hung from hooks in the cabin.

While at home I had delighted in this business, and was a good shot both with pistol and a rifle.

Tom surprised us all by some difficult feats which he had acquired from practice, one of which was to shoot a hawk on the wing, and then bore a second hole through its body as it fell.

Joe was a slow, steady, methodical hand, and wanted time to take a long aim, whereas the beauty of Tom's shooting lay in its rapidity.

Ned was Joe's equal, but a trifle quicker, and as he wanted to see some of my cousin's shooting, Tom sent him to the other end of the ship with a tin pan, which he was to throw high into the air at a given word.

This was to show how he had learned the shot made at the hawk.

I was behind Tom, and happened to fire at the same time, so that it seemed like one loud report.

"That was a stunner. Didn't know I had loaded it so heavy," said Tom, blowing the smoke out of the nipple and proceeding to reload, while Ned and Joe ran for the target.

"I say, Tom, you must have had a couple of bullets in your gun," declared Joe, holding up the mutilated article of the culinary department.

Tom was about to clear himself from the accusation, when he caught sight of the smoke that oozed from my rifle-barrel, and saw me smile.

"Jack! Jack! that's too bad of you, old fellow, trying to impose on us. Never do, never," said he, and the other boys, who had seen me fire, laughed aloud.

After this we practiced with revolvers, firing at a circular mark on the stump of the mainmast; and Tom told us of a feat he had once seen, where a man thrust his knife into a tree, with the keen side out, and stepping back a distance, split six bullets in rapid succession, the halves entering on each side of the blade.

That evening the sun set in a bewildering maze of gold, lavender, purple, orange, crimson and blue, such as we had never seen equaled.

Salt meat was commencing to grow monotonous again, and when Joe proposed turtle-soup, every one joined in with an alacrity that made Tom smile, for he remembered our first dislike to the looks of the matamata.

We cast lots in order to see who should remain behind, and it fell upon poor me; so I am forced to watch my comrades disappear from the moonlit beach in among the trees. Several hours later the boat shot into view, and I assisted in hauling a large tortoise on board, which was as hauling as Julius Caesar, or any other ancient hero.

I soon noticed that Joe and Ned were dripping

wet, and Tom almost stifling with suppressed laughter, and while they were below changing their clothes, I heard the ludicrous story.

It seemed that not finding what they wished on this side of the lake, they had gone around. They managed to turn a large one over, and came in sight of another.

Ned and Joe wouldn't believe what Tom said about the great strength of the matamata, and at his suggestion they seized hold of this one's flippers. The result was just what might have been expected.

Tom laughed so hard that he was too weak to assist, and the stubborn sailor boys held on until the matamata reached the deep water. Then, with a tremendous kick, it sent them head over heels, and swam off in triumph, leaving Ned holding on to Joe's leg, which in his flurry he thought was the tortoise, and Tom rolling about on the sand shrieking, while the boys floundered about in the lake.

In the morning we had turtle soup, and desiring a good walk, I coaxed Tom to ascend the hill with me, the others choosing to remain on board, and condole with one another on their recent misfortune.

Sitting under our signal of red bunting we looked upon the great ocean, and then communed together on our prospects.

Late in the afternoon we descended, looked to the animals and fowls, and then went on board, where we found the boys diligently practicing the shot at the tin pan with good luck, if one might judge from the battered condition of that article.

Being very hungry, Tom and I did ample justice to the supper, and was soon asleep in our hammocks.

It was something like four o'clock in the morning, as near as I could judge, when I again opened my eyes.

The moon had gone down and the stars looked pale as dawn drew on apace.

These had now become familiar to me, and I no longer marveled at the Southern Cross.

What wind reached us, and gently swayed our hammocks, came from southeast by south.

A singular noise attracted my attention, sounding like the breeze whistling through the rigging of a ship, but I was not in a state to investigate, and by watching the gray belt along the horizon grow broader as morning came on with a listless manner common to one half asleep.

Suddenly a cry of surprise broke from my lips. I sat up and rubbed my eyes, and then looked anxiously again.

Surely I was not deceived; that was certainly the rigging of a ship outlined against the gray belt, and the whistling sound was explained.

For five minutes I sat in my hammock bereft of all power to move, and yet during this time my brain was very busy.

Here our prison life was to end at last.

The ship had evidently been lying off and on for hours, having anchored by moonlight.

My comrades; the thought of them gave me an impetus to move.

Should I awaken them or let them find it out for themselves in the morning?

My desire to hear Tom's voice dictated my movements, and in a moment I had them on deck growling fearfully.

When, however, I pointed to my discovery without saying a word, a low murmur went around, that soon broke out into vivid exclamations.

"Is it a ship?" asked Ned, half crying at the thought of his old mother, and not able to believe his eyes.

"It is, by all that's wonderful. Let's give 'em a yell," declared Joe, greatly excited.

"Softly, boys, softly," said cautious Tom, "we'll wait till daybreak, and then give 'em a salute with the brass cannon here in true man-o'-war style. There's no fear of her slipping away like an *ignis fatuus*, and we have to be sure that she's friendly first."

"Friendly?" exclaimed Ned, his face thermometer falling to zero.

"Confederate privateersmen seem to be plenty in these waters, and to my eye that rigging looks too trim and taut for a merchantman. We will wait; it can do no harm, and may be productive of much good. Boys, help me turn Long Tom on the pivot. 'In times of peace, prepare for war.' We will bring up our muskets again and light up the charcoal furnace."

We helped our leading spirit, but I must confess his words put a damper on our feelings, which would otherwise have been exuberant.

With anxious hearts, we stood behind the bulwarks and gazed at the strange vessel as the light grew stronger.

All of us could now see the rakish, set-back appearance of her masts, and this peculiarity made

me remember a similar description in the new log-book.

Deciding to find out the worst, I hurriedly dived down into the cabin and brought the article in question on deck.

Morning was fast coming on, and the light grew stronger every instant, so that we could see the whole vessel, and reading was an easy task.

The captain had written more about the privateer he met than I gave in the extract, and now I prepared to hastily compare them while the others stood by anxiously awaiting the result.

In every respect, the vessel in the book and that which was anchored beyond the reefs proved to be exactly similar.

There was the same rakish appearance of the masts noticed by the captain, and by close scrutiny I became convinced that the dull color of the fine-looking vessel was really red, slashed here and there with black.

No wonder I let the book fall heedlessly to the deck; no wonder my companions uttered groans of despair.

Without a doubt, we were close beside one of the most noted privateers ever fitted out by the Southern Confederacy to prey upon commerce, the *Red Monarch*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE RESOLVE TO DIE FIGHTING—THE BOAT—HAILING THE PRIZE—LONG TOM'S COMPLIMENTS—SANGRE FOR SANGRE—THE LAND FORCES—A CRITICAL MOMENT—THE LAST OF THE PRIVATEER—A WELCOME SIGHT.

Soon we looked at each other with that grim smile a man might have who stood with the rope around his neck, about to be hanged. I cannot tell how my comrades felt just then, for none of us spoke a word until ten minutes had elapsed.

I only know that I clenched my teeth and made an inward resolution to die rather than be captured by such a well-known desperado as the commander of the privateer.

The ten minutes seemed an hour to me. Tom's voice, unusually gruff, now disturbed our painful reverie, and under his directions we brought up ammunition for the brass cannon, and many muskets.

Gradually the shadows of night faded away, and the sun arose in the east.

Like a statue Tom stood, leaning on his brass cannon and intently watching the privateer, for we had a slight hope that she would sail away without seeing us.

We could see men moving about on the deck, and soon our hopes were effectually banished by the sight of a boat which was lowered and quickly filled. At first we thought they had discovered us, but the sight of half a dozen water-casks told the story.

Several of the men carried guns, which were doubtless meant to assist in obtaining fresh meat, although we put a different construction on the matter until the water-casks made their appearance.

The boat had five occupants, and with four oars to work, came quickly on, passing in through the opening and entering the lagoon.

In the stern-sheets stood a dandified-looking individual, dressed in fancy officer's uniform, and actually carrying a slender sword at his side, the hilt of which was shaped like a gold cross.

After entering the lagoon the boat was headed directly for the creek, and just at this instant old Sol shot his first cheery beams upon the water.

On they came, but when half way between the reefs and the shore, the oars came to a pause; the men stared in wonder at what was before them, (for we had in our leisure hours decked the *Jessie Gray* with green boughs so that she seemed a part of the forest) and silence brooded over the scene.

At length, however, the young officer recovered himself, and gave a hoarse command to "let fall and give way."

The men obeyed, thinking the wreck deserted and their lawful property, but when Tom's "boat ahoy" pealed across the water they once more came to a pause without waiting for an order.

"On board the prize, ahoy!" came from the young man in the stern-sheets, who had now discovered us, and his audacity took us quite aback.

"This ship is no prize. What do you want?" asked Tom.

"Want," explained the other; "we'll soon show you, and back it up with hot iron and cold steel. Do you see that staunch craft?" pointing to the vessel.

"I see her; what of it?" said my cousin.

It was evident that the coolness of his replies exasperated the officer, for he was rapidly losing both his temper and good manners.

"That I'll teach you at closer quarters and to a new tune. Give way, my hearties."

"Stop!"

Like a pistol shot Tom said this, and the men involuntarily paused, for we sometimes come across a voice that seems to have the power of command in it.

"I warn you fairly. Attempt to board us and your doom is sealed. This ship is the *Jessie Gray*. We whipped you in the Atlantic and we can do it again," said Tom, who wished to make out that the whole crew were on board.

"Bosh! go talk to the marines. Forward, I tell you men."

There was no disobeying now and the boat moved on.

I had a fair view of the young officer's face, and my most prominent natural gift is a remembrance of faces.

Seeing that the case was desperate and required a remedy of the same sort, Tom pushed the cannon a trifle, seized upon a hot iron and immediately clapped it upon the touch-hole.

A bright blinding flash, followed by a thunderous discharge, proclaimed that our loading was effectual, and, as the smoke cleared away, we gazed not with a little awe upon the result of the first shot.

The ball had struck the boat at the bow and cut it off as neatly as a French guillotine beheaded a courtier in the days of yore. Scarcely an instant later and, filling, the boat went down, leaving the five men struggling in the water. All but one man could swim, and he clung to a couple of oars while his companions towed him along toward the opening in the reefs.

But for the thrilling nature of our situation we could have laughed at the sight.

A boat was put out which met the men just beyond the reefs, and took them on board.

Ten minutes passed away and we grew anxious. Then signs of activity were shown on the privateer; men ran into the rigging like monkeys, and soon the *Red Monarch* began moving through the water with her canvas spread. Coming as near the reefs as she dared, two port-holes flew open and a broadside of as many guns was sent at us, but the gunners had aimed high, and the missiles, after clipping off some feet of our broken mast, went plunging among the trees.

Tom hastened to discharge the brass cannon, and had the satisfaction of planting a ball between decks, where it created quite a commotion. The *Red Monarch* sailed on for nearly half a mile, then rounded to, and, by considerable tacking, was brought to her former position.

Again the run was made, and the guns belched out their contents, but the aim must have been very deceptive, or else our position was not plain, for the balls followed the path made by the first couple, and managed to cut down a tree.

Then came the roar of Tom's pet, and we gave a shout of approbation at sight of the hole in the privateer's side, just above the water-line, and sufficiently large, had it been below, to have scuttled her.

Our enemy kept on and disappeared from view around the bend toward the west.

This move puzzled us at first, but Ned solved the puzzle by declaring that she had put men ashore to attack us from the land.

That this was true we felt sure when she came in sight again, for a boat was missing from the davits that we had seen before. Slowly the vessel beat up to windward, and upon reaching the old position lay to. This, Tom explained, was because those on board wished to wait until their shore forces were ready so that the two forces could co-operate.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE END OF OUR CRUSOE LIFE—THE MABEL HALL—OUR LAST NIGHT ON THE ISLAND—THOUGHTS ON THE PAST—VISITING FAMILIAR SCENES—TOM AS CHIEF MATE—A NEW USE FOR CANNON BALLS—OUR LOFTY LOOKOUT.

NED, Joe and myself placed all of our muskets on the side nearest the shore, and expressed ourselves ready to shoot the first man who made a leap on to the stone wall.

Tom, in the meantime, looked after the long brass gun, and had it in position.

In this way quarter of an hour passed by.

Then he saw a man step out of the trees and wave a piece of red bunting above his head as a signal.

This was answered from the privateer with a white flag, and the man vanished.

As if anxious to come to blows, the ship was once more put in motion.

Three minutes passed and then the ball began.

Tom commenced it this time, sending a ball that shaved off the beautiful privateer's bowsprit, and spoiled her nobby appearance.

Their return shots were better aimed than the previous ones, as, of the two, we had a hole bored in the side of the ship, which however was of little consequence.

At this juncture we saw a squad of some twenty-five or thirty men come out of the woods and make for the water.

They were in a solid phalanx, and carried a boat above them, which proved that they were ready for contingencies.

Joe, Ned and myself drew in long breaths.

We had never knowingly shed human blood; but the time seemed at hand when we could say this no longer.

With determined faces we pulled back the hammers of our muskets and waited.

What might have happened after this, I would not like to say, but certainly we should have fought to the last gasp.

Tom at this moment called out that the privateer had run up a red flag on her halliards, and was vanishing again around the bend.

What this meant we did not know, but the body of men ashore seemed to, for, coming to a halt they turned around and quickly disappeared among the trees, leaving us gaping with amazement, and ignorant of what had prevented the assault.

Ten minutes later, and while we stood ready for anything, the gallant privateer, came in sight again, heading in a northerly direction, before the wind.

One glance toward the opposite point of the compass and the tale was told.

A large ship in plain view, and heading directly toward us,

Thank God! our deliverance had come at last.

With strained eyes we watched the progress of the ship which we hoped was to prove our deliverance. Twenty minutes after the privateer had moved away, she came to anchor at almost the same spot so lately occupied by the *Red Monarch*, and we saw to our surprise that the new-comer was a perfect model to the wreck we were on.

A boat was lowered and came toward the shore, ostensibly with the same purpose in view as the privateersmen, and the men in her looked even more astonished when they saw our ship.

Uttering what appeared to be cries of delight, they came dashing along. However, their impetus was stayed when they caught sight of our faces above the bulwarks, and Long Tom frowning upon them in a manner at once significant and persuasive.

A hail from our leader brought them alongside, and the officer clambered on deck by the aid of a rope thrown to him.

He was a middle-aged man, and looked every inch a commander and a gentleman.

It was not long before we were in possession of the facts relating to the wreck.

The vessel outside the reefs, the *Mabel Hall*, and our wreck, the *Jessie Gray*, belonged to the same company.

Just after rounding the cape, the latter had been overtaken by a terrific storm, and believing her to be sinking, the officers and crew had deserted in the boats.

By the kindness of Providence they had survived the storm, and were picked up seventy days later by the *Mabel Hall*.

They were bound in opposite directions, and the rescuers had put back to leave the rescued at Valparaiso, when they sighted the island, and hearing firing had made for the land.

The man who attended to the long brass cannon had declared that he heard its voice, but they laughed him into silence.

When Captain Halleck finished his story, we told him ours, to which he listened with great interest.

I related my wonderful adventure as to how I was trapped on board the *Philo*, and after asking me several questions, declared that he was well acquainted with my father, and that my uncle on my mother's side was principal owner of these two vessels.

This news did not surprise me much, for Joe Whitney was a wealthy ship-owner of New York.

Captain Halleck had a small share in the cargo of the *Jessie Gray*, and of course he was overjoyed to find things safe when he had considered it all lost. He made his plans at once.

The other vessel could not remain over two days, but during that time the united crews could rig up the wreck well enough for her to reach the nearest port, where she could be refitted. After saying that he would begin work immediately, the captain left us.

Soon utter confusion seemed to reign about our quiet island home. Boats pulled here and there laden with goods. All of our chattels were brought on board the *Mabel Hall*, as we intended leaving in her.

The cargo of the *Jessie Gray* was mostly on

shore by night, and we slept on shore in our hammocks. As I lay awake, unable to sleep, I thought over our pleasant stay upon Crusoe Island, and in spite of my great joy at the prospect of seeing my home, regrets would creep in unawares.

I looked at the hill-top, silvered by the moon's rays, but both pole and signal were gone. During the day one of the sailors had, by my directions, gone and pulled down the old friend, for should we leave it, some ship might be lured out of her course.

The red bunting I had safe in my sea-chest, and in time to come, one glance at this dear relic would bring vividly to my mind the many pleasant days spent upon our island home.

By the restless movements in Tom's hammock I knew he was ruminating also, and, judging others by my own inclinations, I didn't venture to disturb him, for at such a time solitude is desirable.

When I opened my eyes, morning was at hand. Leaping from my hammock, I awoke my comrades, and we all walked down to the beach.

The sailors who had slept on shore among the goods that formed a part of the *Jessie Gray's* cargo, were not yet awake, although the sun was peeping above the eastern horizon.

Our last breakfast on the island was soon dispatched in the solitude of our cabin, and, during the day, we tramped almost everywhere, taking leave of our home.

By evening everything was completed.

The *Jessie Gray* had her cargo aboard, and, with trees for masts, was in pretty good order.

As we were to sail with the rising of the sun, the farewells were said on both sides.

Captain Halleck had promised to write to my parents as soon as we reached San Francisco; but the letter never came to them, as the poor man died of fever in Valparaiso.

I was treated like a guest by Captain Somers. Only that I insisted upon it, he would not have let me touch a rope. While rounding the cape his first mate had been lost, and Tom was eagerly pounced upon as the very man for the place, as he certainly was.

By his kind firmness and his willingness to lend a hand in an emergency, he gained the respect of all the sailors but those few evil spirits that generally crop out in a crowd.

These had gotten the upper hand of the last mate, and had pleasant times of it.

They immediately jumped Tom, but found him mad, islands we passed, my thoughts

in our late home.

At the same time Ned's tenor voice came

turnfully to my ears, as he sang the words that

many days had been ringing in my head,

the wing that his thoughts were directed in the

Our channel:

Tom's channel:

As slow our ship, her foamy track,

in th Against the wind was cleaving,

amo Her trembling pennant still looked back

love To that dear isle 'twas leaving.

ship Too loath we part from all we love,

Jo From all the links that bind us,

spok We'll turn our hearts where'er we go,

him To the isle we've left behind us."

and

ther

your pipe and smoke it into your thick skull,"

said Joe, at length, quite fiercely.

The man, who was really a coward at heart,

looked at him, and saw a sturdy, well-formed

frame that evidently possessed strength, and he

was wisely silent during the remainder of the re-

cit.

Of course this made enemies of the four sailors,

but it was little we cared for that.

When Tom heard about it he gave me some

good advice, telling me to keep my eyes on those

men so long as we were on the *Mabel Hall*, for

when a sailor hates he does not hesitate at any-

thing, and there was such a thing as falling over-

board by accident some dark night.

Joe soon informed me that the men had already

commenced operations.

One of the sailors, who were great friends of

his, had overheard the plan, which was now an

old one, practiced on board men-of-war.

About midnight, when the first watch came

down Joe's hammock would suddenly be cut,

and he would receive a beautiful thump by the

fall.

I had heard of a means by which this stale

trick could be palmed off upon the person under-

taking it, and between Joe and myself we arrang-

ed matters.

The former, in the semi-gloom below, managed

to slip out of his own hammock and get into a

spare one near by, after placing a couple of six-

pound cannon balls in his own.

At midnight the second watch was called, and

as they went out, a thundering racket arose.

Upon the light from the binnacle lamp being

turned on, it was discovered that Blossom, one of the four men, was dancing about on one foot, howling with pain.

He had intended rushing out with the rest after cutting the headline of Joe's hammock, but the balls had come down too rapidly.

For several weeks he had quite a sore foot, and the joke was hugely enjoyed by all on board but his friends.

The same trick was never tried again, for it had proved to be of the rule that works both ways.

Bright and early we were up at the peep of dawn.

Before sunrise our anchor was at the cathead, and a few minutes after sail was made,

Nearly all of the men were in the rigging, holding on like so many monkeys, and as we drew further away from the island the wind became fresher, increasing our speed.

The cheers from those on board our sweet named comrade, the *Jessie Gray*, were answered by ones equally as loud from our men, but of the four late castaways, none had eyes or ears for this.

Here we were rapidly leaving our dear island home, and anxious to make the most of the moments left us, we peered steadily at the well-remembered features.

It seemed like parting from an old friend, and I could not help wiping my eye, nor could the others.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ISLE WE'VE LEFT BEHIND US—LIFE ON THE BOUNDING WAVE—HOW BACKSTAY JACK CAME BY HIS NAME—THE CHAMPION YARNIST—SAILORS' CONSOLATION—BOUNDING THE HORN—MEMORY WILL EVER CARRY US BACK TO CRUSOE ISLAND.

NED came scrambling up to our lofty perch with a piece of paper in his mouth.

"What's that you have there?" asked Tom, suspecting the truth.

"A few lines, partly from memory and partly original; listen, comrades, and think you of the girls we've left behind us. You know the old tune," and Ned's fresh young voice pealed forth with a mournful cadence that made our hearts heavy.

"HARK ON THE WING, and then do a second hole through its body as it fell.

Joe was a slow, steady, methodical hand, a wanted time to take a long aim, whereas the beauty of Tom's shooting lay in its rapidity.

Ned was Joe's equal, but a trifle quicker, as he wanted to see some of my cousin's shooting, Tom sent him to the other end of the ship with a tin pan, which he was to throw high in the air at a given word.

This was to show how he had learned the shot made at the hawk.

I was behind Tom, and happened to fire at the same time, so that it seemed like one loud report.

"That was a stunner. Didn't know I had loaded it so heavy," said Tom, blowing the smoke out of the nipple and proceeding to reload, while Ned and I ran for the target.

"Bravo!" cried Joe.

"Don't compliment me; there isn't much of it original, I assure you, Joe. But look, she's nearly gone, boys. Our dear little island home is among the things that were."

As we looked, a circle of gold seemed to settle upon the dim hill-tops; this good omen grew very indistinct, and, at length, we gazed upon the vast waste of water.

Slowly and sadly we went down, and for a long time the words of Ned's parting tribute rang in my ears.

The day passed with the usual monotony.

Generally the hardest work, stowing cargo and such things, comes just after leaving port, and during the remainder of the voyage various daily tasks are gone through with.

When all other jobs are out, some mates will set a man to work scraping the rust from the cable.

If the reader is under the impression that during a week of fine weather, a sailor has nothing else to do beyond eating, sleeping and looking at the sails, then he has an entirely wrong impression as to what constitutes a sailor's life.

It may be very well for poets to sing of a "merry life on the bounding wave," but my word for it, when that wave begins to bound, their tune will change.

On board a well-regulated ship there are two dog watches, from four to six and from six to eight P.M., and during this time the men must look after their private work.

The first regular watch lasts from eight to

twelve, the second to four, and the third up to eight in the morning.

During the day work is always abundant, for every day the decks must be holystoned and the sails attended to.

Sooner than see the cabin boy idle, some mates hunt up their shore boots and make him shine them, although the affair is little less than a farce, as they will not be used for many months.

Thank Heaven! says poor Jack Tar, that all mates are not like this.

Some there are, jolly, good-hearted fellows, ready to lend a helping hand when needed, and laugh at a joke even at their own expense.

I feel compelled to say, however, that this latter class is very few in numbers.

The day passed pleasantly enough to me.

I spent most of it beside a veteran sailor who went by the soubriquet of Backstay Jack.

He was making several new pieces for the worn rigging, and was surrounded by strings and ropes of all sizes, which in his experienced hands rapidly assumed the shape of cringles and other things in a manner that was truly marvelous to me.

I was learning how to make all sorts of curious knots, and the old fellow declared that I was a true born sailor, which praise quite won my heart.

His strange name had a charm for me, and it was not long before I had him telling me how he came by it.

"Want to hear how they painted me Backstay Jack? Well, it ain't much of a yarn, but you're welcome to it, lad. I can spin it off in a jiffy. Ye see, my hearty, it was nigh on ten years back when I shipped on board the *Dolphin* whaler, Joe Graw, owner, bound for the north after oil. We had nearly sighted Greenland, when a blustering gale came on, knocking things sky-high. All of this had to be fixed, and it took us quite awhile to replace our spars and rigging, being rather short-handed for a whaler."

"One day, Tom Bodlick (dash his old timbers any way, I used to call him Badluck) was working aloft, when he lost his hold and fell.

"I don't see how he did it, for I've been on the water all my life, and never tumbled; fact is, I believe I'd find it hard to fall.

"Ye know, lad, what a man will do for his life, how a sinking man will grab at a straw? Well, Tom had grabbed hold of a spar, and held on for dear life.

"He wasn't a very light man, must have carried nigh two hundred, and as he was at the end of the timber it bent fearfully with him.

"The only way to save himself would be to work in hand-over-hand; but this was impossible when the spar was bent so much. Tom, he wriggled, twisted, kicked and tried to pull himself up, but it was no go.

"Every man on board the *Dolphin* felt sure that his time had come, for to fall was to be smashed on the deck.

"I was the only one aloft besides himself, and if I'd had a rope I could have saved him easy. My knife I had left on deck, so I couldn't cut one.

"Several men sprang into the rigging with ropes; but I knew they would be too late, for the thin end of the spar was cutting Tom's hands fearfully.

"On the first alarm I had hurried to the spar he fell from, and which was some five feet above his hands.

"A queer sort of a plan rushed into my head, and, without thinking, I set about carrying it out.

"Crawling over the spar, I lowered myself and hung by my hands.

"I'm a pretty tall man, and as I hung at full length my feet came in front of Tom's face.

"I had intended putting my feet under his arms, and helping him grab hold in that way.

"Tom, however, had more grit than I had given him credit for; as is often the case when you underestimate a man's qualities, he proved it by quietly transferring one hand to my foot.

"Well, I managed to slip along the spar, and the end of it was that Tom Bodlick owed his life to me.

"The men declared that I had been a real backstay to him, and from that day to this you will find 'Backstay Jack' signed on my ship's paper.

Now, younker, ye've got the yarn, and though it ain't half so good as Bally Bogen's worst one, it has more truth in it than all of his put together, and not saying much about that," and Jack recommenced work on his ropes and strings.

The person mentioned as Bally Bogen was the worst liar it had been my fortune to set eyes on.

He was ever ready with his scrapes and adventures with lions, wolves, Indians, and such things, terrible yarns that pleased, while they one and all bore the print of untruth stamped upon them.

A young acquaintance of my earlier years, by name Dow Walters, had occupied that enviable

position in my mind, but after listening to a few of Bally's, related with a sober countenance that seemed all the more comical to me, Mr. Dow Walters was put down as second-class. His pedestal was occupied by another; in fact, he was nowhere.

Never had such a hero lived like Bally Bogen, according to the usual tenor of his reminiscences.

I dare not give one of them now, as my story is rapidly nearing the end; and, besides, at this point, the reader might not be able to digest even the most probable of them all.

Should I relate the yarn I heard during my first night on board the *Mabel Hall*, and which the men united in declaring Bally's best, as they generally did with each succeeding one, the reader would deem me a lunatic.

How the fellow managed to make up these terrific stretches I know not, but he must have possessed a very creative imagination, for there was always one on the top of his tongue.

One thing I am sure of, and this is the fact that the literary world lost a brilliant light when Bally Bogen became a sailor.

Bally was certainly educated far better than myself, for he threw around seven-syllabled words as if were a walking dictionary, and often introduced certain chemical elements that made me stare in amazement.

Of course, Tom, as chief mate, could not mingle much with the crew, and thus he lost a splendid opportunity of filling his log with yarns that would have made the most valiant minister afraid to pass a grave-yard after dark.

When upon better acquaintance I heard Bally's history, I discovered that my impression in regard to his class was true.

His father was a rich merchant of Cleveland, Ohio, and Bally had passed creditably through Yale College.

After such a course of study, he found that instead of the hearty fellow he had went to be, he seemed sickly, and his doctor recommended a voyage upon the ocean with plenty of work to cure him.

This year's trip had made him a man again, and he liked the life so well that he refused to leave it.

He had already made two trips, and his father had promised that when he got into port, a vessel of his own should await its captain.

Bally had voluntarily gone as a common seaman; but he was treated well on all hands, for the men knew his prospects, and respected a man who wished to learn how to obey before he attempted to command.

Bally also told me how he had picked up this habit of yarn-telling, and declared his intention of dropping it altogether when he reached port.

On his first voyage there was a sailor on board who had a glib tongue, and who was quite a favorite among the crew on account of his yarning proclivities.

He often jeered the young collegian in the presence of his mates on account of his muteness.

Little did he think that the latter, while seemingly intent on listening, was laying a plot for his downfall.

Like the famous gun-powder plot, the mine was arranged and only needed a spark to explode it.

One night this man had finished his best tale, and while the sailors were giving vent to various exclamations of satisfaction, the narrator looked around with a triumphant grin, and, unluckily for him, his eye rested on Bally. A word from him proved to be the spark needed, and a yarn was the result, such as he, in his wildest fancy, had never come near.

The men sat entranced, and so great was their interest that pipes were forgotten and allowed to go out.

When Bally finished he was unanimously called the champion yarn-teller. The other fellow gave in without even a show of fight, for he saw what a slim chance he had with the young collegian's flow of language and great imaginative brain.

Ever since that time he had been kept at work, and the watch that secured him was lucky. His fame preceded him from one ship to the other, and it was his music that usually lulled the men to sleep.

Need it be said that Bally only played on the lyre (liar)? Bally was a young man of some twenty-six years, and not bad-looking, by any means. When with either Tom or myself, Bally proved a very sociable gentleman, and many an interesting conversation did we have in the fore-top, branching off and discussing favorite theories.

The first day passed away quietly, as did also the next. On this night, I took my turn on the watch with Backstay Jack, Joe and another sailor as companions, and we managed to get the

former to sing one of his original ditties in his cracked voice. I have called it:

"THE SAILOR'S CONSOLATION."

"One night 't came on a hurricane, the sea was mountains rollin'.
When Barney Bantline turned his quid, and said to Billy Bowline:
'A strong nor'wester's blowing, Bill—hark! don't you hear it's roar now?
My conscience, how I pity all unhappy folks on shore now;
And as for them who're out all day on business from their houses,
And late at nights are going home, to cheer their babes and spouses,
While you and I, Bill, on the deck, are comfortably lying;
My eyes, what tiles and chimney pots about their heads are flying.
We know what risks all landsmen run, from noblemen to tailors,
Then, Bill, let us thank Providence, that you and I are sailors.'"

which, in my estimation, was putting it rather roughly for the land-lubbers.

On board the *Pluto* I had on several occasions taken a short turn at the wheel in fair weather, and I liked the occupation so well that I hailed with joy the opportunity of trying the thing again.

It was fated, however, that weeks should pass before the chance came.

During the early part of the third watch, Tom's voice came rolling down in hoarse tones:

"All hands on deck to shorten sail," and every man was instantly awake.

"Tumble out, Ned," I cried, giving him a punch and leaping from the hammock.

"Show a leg here, Joe," said Ned, giving his next neighbor the benefit of his fist, and in another moment the three of us were hastening on deck with the remainder of the crew.

In the few hours that had elapsed since our going below, a marvelous change had taken place in the face of nature.

There was a strong wind blowing, that sent a shiver through us at first, and I mentally thanked Joe, who had directed me to put on my warm pea-jacket before venturing out.

When we went down, not the faintest sign of a cloud marred the broad dome of heaven where the bright stars twinkled and winked mysteriously.

Now the scene had changed, shifting winds had come up, and from horizon to horizon stretched the unbroken expanse of gray clouds, which had an angry look about them.

We were soon busily engaged in taking in sail, what little there was in the breeze.

The men had not been called before this, for the simple reason that both Tom and the captain knew they would need every wink of sleep they could get.

Doubling the Cape, even in the best weather known there, is no child's play, and at times is perfectly horrible.

The mercury in the cabin had fallen rapidly, and knowing that time was precious, the captain had given the order.

As the wind came over our quarter in heavy

gusts we were soon scudding along under bare poles.

When everything had been made snug aloft, the men sought the sheltered portions of the deck, and waited for something that would need their service.

They looked cheerful enough just then, but I knew there would be some fearful growling before the Atlantic was reached.

This characteristic is a sailor's chief failing, and even the best-hearted Jack Tar afloat gives in to it when adversity comes.

I saw no laughing among the men, however; the time for that had passed, and even merry Bally Bogen's face had a serious look upon it, for with the storms starting thus early, our chances for reaching the Atlantic and foundering were about equally balanced.

Old Backstay Jack assured me, however, in his quaint way.

"I've been round the Horn thirteen times, lad, and nary a wrack yet; I would like to shake hands with the man who has done better," said he.

Soon the rain began to fall, and in half an hour, just at dawn, it changed into sleet.

By this time the air had become so very cold, that the rain and snow froze solid to the ship as soon as it touched.

There was very little fun in this, but we sought shelter as far as was possible, and huddled ourselves in heavy pea-jackets.

This was not so bad, and had we gone through in this style, none of us would have minded it much.

I knew this inactivity could not last long, and shivered at the thought of climbing the frozen rigging, and handling a sail as stiff as a board, but I was not the coward to back out and accept Tom's offer of a comfortable place in the cabin, which was extended to me in courtesy through the captain on account of my being a favorite nephew of the owner.

Soon we would come into the thick of the storm, and then we might count on the rough time to commence.

The day drew near an end, and the sleet still continued to come down, stopping at intervals, it is true, but descending with renewed violence, as if additional impetus was gained by the halt.

After dinner half of the men went on deck to be prepared for any emergency, while the others sought their hammocks.

They were to sleep several hours, and then our turn would come.

This plan was put into practice because we were sure to be on deck the greater part of the night, and wished to be prepared for it.

Our turn came at length, and with considerable satisfaction we rolled into our hammocks.

Now if there is one thing a sailor hates it is that—infant I had almost called it—cry of "all hands on deck" when he has just turned in.

There is some excuse for the proverbial grumbling, and I must confess contritely that Jack Merton lent his assistance to the half howl that came from below when, some twenty minutes after turning in, and just when we were settled down to an invigorating nap, the words were

shouted in stentorian tones which I had some difficulty in recognizing as my cousin's.

We were now in the heavy gale, and our hard work set in.

Night had come on, black and gloomy, and this made it all the worse for us.

Fancy for a moment, dear reader, that you are climbing the icy rigging, crawling out on some slender spar, and working with benumbed fingers at some sail broken loose, which is frozen as stiff as a board, darkness surrounding you, the wind shrieking in your ears and the hail rattling everywhere with a velocity that makes you think needles are entering the skin, and all the while the old sail jerking in a manner that threatens to knock you overboard.

A very pleasant picture truly, and yet I am drawing it exceedingly mild.

Days passed away in this manner, and night followed night.

I got in a corner and laughed heartily when I found my growling voice raised in the general clamor.

Sleep was a stranger to us, and I verily believe that about the sixth day I should have lost myself in slumber if I were hung up by my heels in some dry spot.

It could not last forever, that was certain, and, as we pushed on in spite of adverse winds, we would in the end find ourselves in the Atlantic, and beyond the icy grip of sleet and snow.

On the seventh day, much to our satisfaction, the continued storm showed signs of abating.

The sleet thinned out, and by evening we had a glimpse of blue sky, which was the first we had seen for a week.

In the morning not a cloud remained, and soon the men discovered a new planet, as they laughingly called the sun.

As the ice melted from the rigging, the day was spent in cleaning up, and in the night we enjoyed a second good sleep, which helped us considerably, although I felt it would require a month to become myself again.

This was my first real experience in rounding the Horn, for during my other trips, being down with the fever, I knew nothing of my dangers.

We were now in the Atlantic bound for London, and from thence to Boston.

The captain had promised to speak any ship, and let us boys send letters home.

Tom also desired to communicate with the owners of the lost merchant vessel, the *Romance*.

I expected to be home myself ere many months, and as I sat upon the cross-trees idly watching the islands we passed, my thoughts drifted back to our late home.

At the same time Ned's tenor voice came mournfully to my ears, as he sang the words that for many days had been ringing in my head, showing that his thoughts were directed in the same channel:

"As slow our ship, her foamy track,
Against the wind was cleaving,
Her trembling pennant still looked back
To that dear isle 'twas leaving.
Too loath we part from all we love,
From all the links that bind us,
We'll turn our hearts where'er we go,
To the isle we've left behind us."

[THE END.]

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